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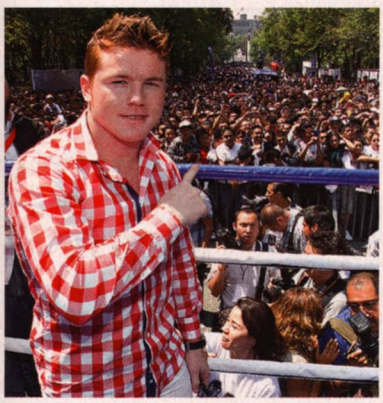

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THE COLORFUL AUTHOR AND FORMER EDITOR OF RING MAGAZINE PASSED AWAY ON MARCH 25. LOOK FOR A TRIBUTE TO HIM IN THE JULY 2012 ISSUE.

ONE SO-SO PERFORMANCE DOESN'T NECESSARILY **MEAN THE WORST**

By **Michael Rosenthal**

Fighters can sometimes become victims of their own success in this fair-weather sport. Take Manny Pacquiao, Nonito Donaire and Sergio Martinez, three of the best fighters in the world.

Pacquiao had destroyed one big-name opponent after another to become the king of the sport yet suddenly doubters emerged because he struggled to beat rival Juan Manuel Marquez in November.

Donaire had taken our breath away in recent fights but, after moving up two weight classes, suddenly was flawed because he didn't annihilate Wilfredo Vazquez Jr in February.

And Martinez, who climbed the pound-for-pound ratings after a series of impressive performances, has had his credentials questioned because he had to work to beat Darren Barker and Matthew Macklin.

I would suggest taking a deep breath and not jumping to conclusions.

Pacquiao might very well be declining; he has had many tough fights and is at that age. We shouldn't dismiss him because he fought another great fighter on even terms in one fight, though.

If Pacquiao turns in a spectacular performance against Timothy Bradley – another pound-for-pounder – on June 9, the perception of him will revert largely to what it was before Marquez.

Maybe Donaire, who faces Cristian Mijares on July 14, won't carry his power to higher weight classes. We'll see. Still, he probably is just another breath-taking knockout from erasing fresh doubts.

And while Martinez might not be quite as good as we thought he was, he has stopped four consecutive capable opponents. If he does the same to a bigger-name foe, we'll probably forget Barker and Macklin.

The reality is that our opinions of fighters are likely to change every time they fight. If they look great, we'll use that word to describe them. If they look human, we'll think – or at least wonder – the worst.

This is definitely a what-have-you-done-for-me-lately sport in part because the top fighters are in action so infrequently. The best fight only every six months.

We should keep something in mind, though: No one, not even the greatest who ever laced up gloves, looked great every time out. Ray Robinson, Muhammad Ali and Ray Leonard struggled at times even when they were in or near or their primes.

That's inevitable given the quality of opposition elite fighters regularly face. If their opponents aren't quite at their level, they're likely not far behind.

Alas, we're justified in analyzing the careers of fighters like Pacquiao, Donaire and Martinez. That's part of being a fan. At the same time, they've proven over time that they're among the best in the business. One or two fights in which them don't dominate probably doesn't change that. ■

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Jean-Marc Mormeck (on the canvas) became the latest victim of RING heavyweight champion **Wladimir Klitschko**, who stopped the overmatched Frenchman in four rounds on March 3.

Image: **Patrik Stollarz-AFP-Getty Images**

Kell Brook, a rising star from England, dominated **Matthew Hatton** (right) to win a one-sided unanimous decision on March 17 in Sheffield.

Image: Scott Heavey-Getty Images

Devon Alexander (left) made a big statement in his first fight as a full-fledged welterweight Feb. 25 in St. Louis, easily outpointing **Marcos Maidana**.

Image: **Tom Hogan-Hoganphotos**

Marco Huck (right) seemed to land more and harder punches than **Alexander Povetkin** in his heavyweight debut but Povetkin won a majority decision in Germany.

Image: **Thomas Kienzle-AFP-Getty Images**

DISTURBING TREND

I'm seeing a trend with boxing analysts in recent years that was on full display with the Sergio Martinez-Matthew Macklin fight on March 17.

On one hand, these folks claim they want to see the long wars of old, when fighters were matched against stiff competition and a couple of losses on your record didn't mean your career was over. On the other hand, if a rated fighter doesn't dominate his opponent and knock him out in the early rounds, it is seen as a failure and perhaps the fighter was somehow overrated. How quick HBO's analysts were to put Martinez in this category.

I believe we witnessed a fantastic fight with a game challenger who fought his heart out and a champion who needed some time to figure him out but in the end delivered the same type of performance that made him a champion in the first place. I got the sense that if Martinez had knocked out Macklin in the first few rounds, these same analysts would be complaining that it wasn't a good matchup.

Come on guys, this was a fantastic fight that gave the fans value for their dollar. I can't wait to see more competitive fights just like this one.

Jim Factor
Danville, Calif.

HEAVY DUTY PROBLEM

It seems to me that the American MMA promoters are doing a much better job exposing their heavyweights than the American boxing promoters. And the European boxing promoters, who are keeping boxing's heavyweight division alive, are also doing a better job of getting their heavyweights on American TV than the Americans themselves.

EPIX has recently televised both Klitschkos, David Haye, Marco Huck, Alexander Povetkin, Tyson Fury, Dereck Chisora and Robert Helenius. Yet three top American big men with a combined record of 71-0 (68 knockouts) have received little or no exposure on TV.

While Seth Mitchell is finally getting undercard exposure on HBO, Deontay Wilder (21-0, 21 knockouts), David Rodriguez (36-0, 34 KOs) and Jeremiah Graziano (14-0, 13 KOs) – a young cruiserweight who could grow into a heavyweight – are unknowns because they don't fight on television.

What is going on here?

Robert Casazza
Staten Island, N.Y.

CLASS ACT

Andre Ward made a surprise appearance at L.A. Boxing in Brentwood, (Northern) Calif., to watch a local USA Boxing show. No bodyguards, no entourage, no flashy clothes or jewelry. He was accompanied by his wife and four small children. He sat in front of my wife and a friend of mine who had his young son with him. My wife and friend would later tell me that Andre turned around at least three times during the first half of the fights and asked them if they had a good view. He even offered to move if it made their view of the ring better!

Andre took the time to stop and speak with my fighter and other fighters on the card. He was calm, cool, polite, humble ... and the list could go on.

Throughout the rich history of boxing, fans have glorified champions who were thugs, wannabe celebrities, big mouths with no tact, drug abusers, womanizers ... and the list could go on.

Andre Ward is a class act in and out of the ring, a God-fearing man, a family man, a humble man and a true warrior.

Dave Hartman
Brentwood, Calif.

IMMENSELY COMPELLING

Your profile of trainer and former boxer Ann Wolfe in the April 2012 issue was immensely compelling. I would encourage Ann to pen a full-length autobiography detailing her struggles. A movie deal should then come her way, as her true-life story easily eclipses the fictional film Million Dollar Baby.

Richard Haglund
Mound City, Kan.

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The German fans continue to flock to the fights of **Wladimir Klitschko** (here, against **Jean-Marc Mormeck**) and brother **Vitali** in spite of one one-sided matchup after another. Image: **Friendemann Vogel-Getty Images**

HEAVYWEIGHT ANGST

By: **David Greisman**

Whatever you might have enjoyed from the three straight weeks of heavyweight title fights emanating out of Germany, it wasn't because of the Klitschko brothers.

That's not to blame Vitali and Wladimir. They fight to win. They do that well. They do it too well, despite massive television ratings in Germany and the tens of thousands who flock to arenas. The fans watch one-sided bouts that have no good reason to last as long as they do, no good reason beyond more chances to see the ring card *fraulein*s between rounds. Those spare seconds are too often the highlights of Klitschko fight nights.

That German fans still come out can probably be explained with yet another forced reference to David Hasselhoff's singing career. Glad we got that out of the way.

Back on topic: Two of the three heavyweight bouts had intrigue, action and drama between the bells. Dereck Chisora's pressure and sheer will — combined with Vitali Klitschko's left shoulder injury and perhaps age causing the vodka in his veins to begin to lose its kick — made for a fun fight, even if Klitschko still won clearly. We saw a Klitschko brother in a somewhat competitive outing, then imagined the days when heavyweights were actually good enough for that to happen more often.

And then Chisora and David Haye brawled at a press conference, and our haughty preference for the sweet science went by the wayside. No wonder Kimbo Slice's backyard bouts on YouTube get more viewers than boxing matches on American television. No wonder audiences at "Jerry Springer" tapings are livelier than the high rollers at Vegas undercards.

In reality, we don't necessarily need more great heavyweights to

The sport needs more heavyweight fights like the one in which **Alexander Povetkin** (left) and **Marco Huck** engaged on Feb. 25.

face the Klitschkos. We just need more good heavyweights to face each other, rather than beating up punching bags until they get the chance to become one themselves for Wladimir or Vitali.

That was true six years ago with Lamon Brewster and Sergei Liakhovich. And it was true again a week after Klitschko-Chisora, when heavyweight beltholder Alexander Povetkin and rising cruiserweight titlist Marco Huck put forth 12 compelling rounds, a mixture of flaws and fun. This being boxing, though, even the fans have to take their lumps. The controversial decision for Povetkin in a bout Huck appeared to have won took the talk away from the fight itself.

There's a difference between a cherry on top and a big, steaming pile of something. Boxing, if it worked right, would bring us, and Huck, a rematch. That's not our sport. Instead, we might just see Povetkin take on Hasim Rahman next — yet another title fight against yet another potential punching bag.

That's what we got, a week after Povetkin-Huck, with Wladimir Klitschko against Jean-Marc Mormeck. Klitschko, Emanuel Steward and Mormeck were the only people expecting some problems for Wladimir. Everyone else knew that a whole bunch of Germans would be there to watch a French fighter be bombarded. There should be yet another forced reference to World War II here. And now that we got that out of the way …

***

Fighters train to go the distance, but only if that distance is 12 rounds in the ring.

Andre Dirrell said he wouldn't go to Canada to fight Lucian Bute. He won't have to, not now that Bute is leaving Canada to fight Carl Froch in the United Kingdom. Timothy Bradley and Devon Alexander ended up facing each other in Dirrell's home state of Michigan, settling for an empty stadium because it was a neutral site — not Alexander's hometown of St. Louis, nor Bradley's territory in California — and because HBO's money meant ticket sales didn't matter.

Long gone are the days of Muhammad Ali going to Toronto for Chuvalo, to London for Cooper and to Germany for Mildenberger.

Zab Judah (left) took a chance by fighting **Cory Spinks** in Spinks' hometown of St. Louis and the gamble paid off.
Image: **Chris Cozzone-Fightwireimages**

Zab Judah once received short money to face Cory Spinks in front of a rabid Spinks crowd in St. Louis. Judah stopped Spinks and won the welterweight championship. Now so many fighters want instant gratification, no longer going the distance, making the sacrifices, or taking chances.

It was disappointing when Paulie Malignaggi initially shot down the idea of heading to Ukraine to challenge Vyacheslav Senchenko for a welterweight title. Sanity was restored. Malignaggi, at this point in his career, realized he shouldn't turn down major fights for major titles and for what now must be considered major money.

Low-paying work is better than no work at all.

It's foolishly nationalist for American fighters and fans to say that foreign boxers must come to the States to prove themselves, then rationalize refusing to go overseas when it's time do the same. It's better to take your career to enemy territory than it is to keep it in limbo.

***

Here's to Lennox Lewis and Mike Tyson, to Joe Calzaghe and Ricky Hatton, to every fighter who says he's retired and then stays retired, rather than trying to prolong the magic when all they'd end up doing instead is prolonging the pain.

We're approaching nearly 28 years since Evander Holyfield turned pro and 23 years since Roy Jones Jr. did the same. Countless fighters from two decades ago think all the VH1 "I Love the '90s" nostalgia applies to them. Other boxers retire and return more often than a certain NFL quarterback did, returning to far less acclaim and retaining much less ability.

This is a young man's sport still draining the last out of old men's marketability. That can make for ugly moments. Yes, some boxers, like some musicians, still have it after all these years. Madonna can still perform. That doesn't mean we want to see her in the same outfits. ■

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GREATEST MOMENT IN SPORTS ... OUTSIDE OF BOXING

EMANUEL STEWARD

"In 1981, we were in New York on the publicity tour for Hearns-Leonard, and someone set up a softball game in Central Park between the New York sportswriters and Kronk.

"We had some good players on the Kronk team. Prentiss Byrd had played professional ball in the minor leagues. He was our shortstop. Milton McCrory's best sport in high school was baseball. He was in center field. Tommy (Hearns) could play. He was at first base. And Dan Duva was on our team because Main Events was promoting the fight. Dan was a player. That surprised me.

"Anyway, Kronk was short one guy, so I took off my sport jacket and agreed to play. I hadn't had a bat in my hands in about 15 years.

Trainer **Emanuel Steward** once demonstrated that he had game in a sport other than boxing. Image: **Alex Grimm-Getty Images**

But I hit a triple, a double and a home run. Each one was on the first pitch. The home run was in my last at bat and it won the game. I think the score was 13 to 11.

"Afterward, Tommy came over to me and said, 'Whoa! You were something.' He couldn't believe it.

"I got a real kick out of that game."

Tommy Zbikowski is the latest NFL player to try his hand at professional boxing. Who was the first star to do so? Image: **Mark Ralston-AFP-Getty Images**

QUICK QUIZ

1. Light-heavyweight great Archie Moore fought four men who held the world heavyweight title at various times in their respective careers. Name them.

2. Mark Gastineau, Alonzo Highsmith and Tommy Zbikowski are among the National Football League veterans who have fought professionally. Who was the first high-profile NFL star to try his hand at professional boxing?

3. Two men fought Mike Tyson, Evander Holyfield and George Foreman. Name them.

FROM AND ABOUT JOE LOUIS

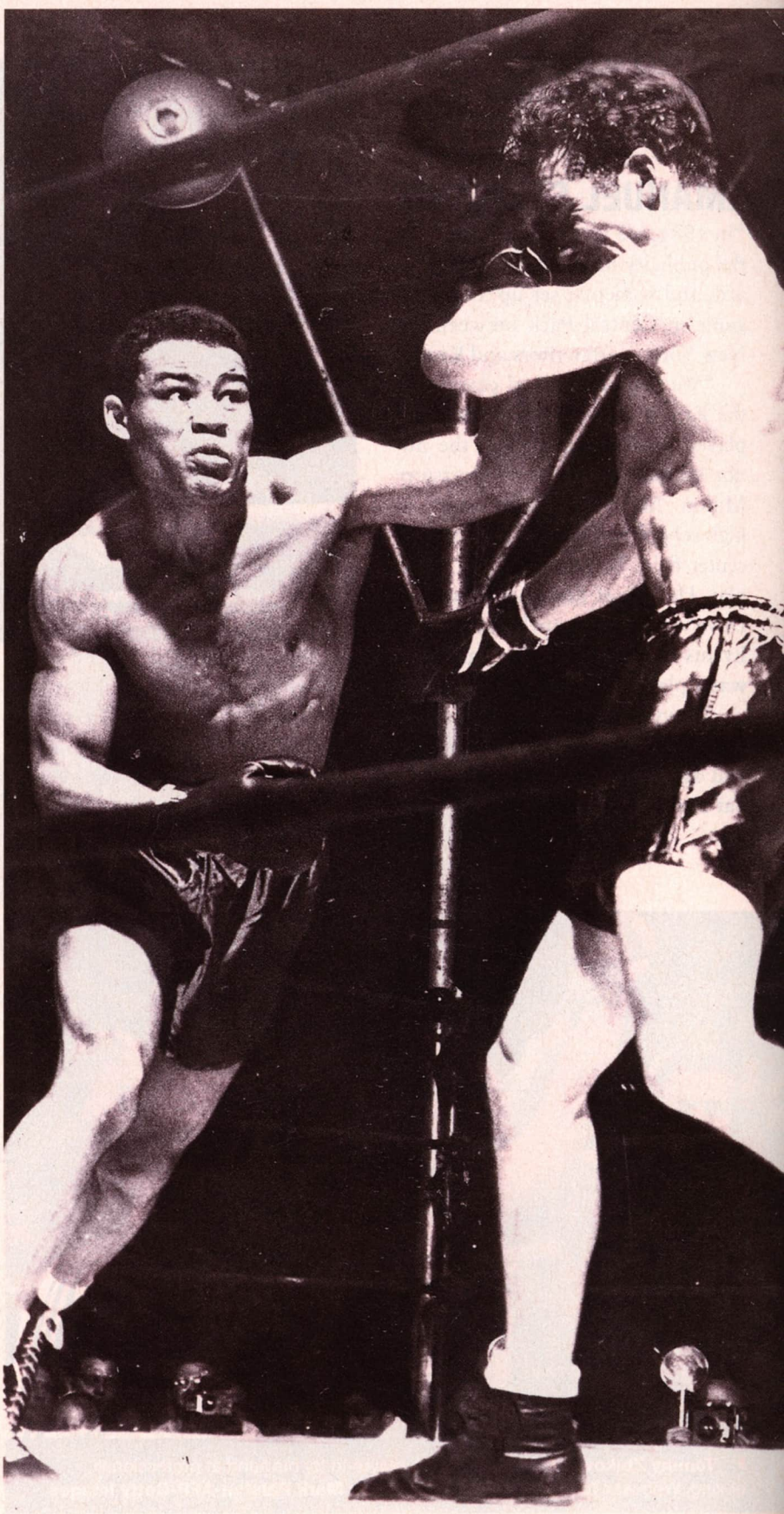
Max Baer: "Fear is standing across the ring from Joe Louis and knowing he wants to go home early."

Barney Ross (on the beating that Louis gave to Tony Galento): "It made my skin crawl. Nobody who ever lived could stand much more of a beating like that. Galento won't be right for weeks. A beating like Joe gave him isn't something you get over with a night's sleep."

Art Rooney (the late Pittsburgh Steelers owner, before the rematch between Louis and Billy Conn): "Billy is like every guy who's been knocked out by Joe Louis. Sure, Billy was great the first time. He'd never been tagged by Joe before and he never knew how hard Joe could hit. He knows now, and it's not good. No guy going in against Louis the second time has the same confidence."

King Levinsky: "Joe Louis finished me. In one round, he turned me from a fighter to a guy selling ties."

Joe Louis (when Art Sykes was taken to the hospital after a Louis knockout punch): "They come in there to give it to me. I have to give it back. I can't say it's a sorry feeling, but I don't like to do it."



Joe Louis didn't like inflicting pain on his opponents but he sure was good at it. Image: **THE RING**

WHITNEY HOUSTON

I met Whitney Houston in 1992 at Muhammad Ali's fiftieth birthday party. Ella Fitzgerald was Queen that night. But Whitney was a beautiful princess who glowed.

Houston was a star by then with countless Grammy Awards and other honors to her credit. Her stirring rendition of "The Star-Spangled Banner" at the 1991 Super Bowl shortly after the start of The Persian Gulf War had further enlarged her following. And she was about to get bigger, having just completed filming with Kevin Costner.

Houston was associated with Ali in the public mind by virtue of having recorded "The Greatest Love of All" (written for the soundtrack of *The Greatest*, which starred Ali, Robert Duvall, James Earl Jones, and Paul Winfield, with cameo appearances by various members of the Ali entourage). I spoke with her briefly at Ali's birthday party. She was more interested in talking with Muhammad, which was fine with me because I was more interested in talking with Ella.

I don't know what Whitney Houston was like as a person, other than what I've experienced through the media over the years. Still, listening to the outpouring of emotion following her death, I can imagine her saying, "Learn from what I did right. But also learn from what I did wrong"

The late **Whitney Houston**, with fellow singer **Ray-J**, attended the **Bernard Hopkins-Joe Calzaghe** fight in Las Vegas in 2008. Image: **Denise Truscello-Getty Images**

RICHARD SCHAEFER

And, finally, this acknowledgement from Golden Boy CEO Richard Schaefer when asked about his own greatest moment as an active participant in sports:

"I'm not a very good athlete, so there hasn't been much glory. Maybe it was helping to separate Floyd Mayweather and Shane Mosley when they started shoving each other at the weigh-in for their fight. If I want to be good at that sort of thing, I'll have to spend more time in the gym to build my muscles up."

QUIZ ANSWERS: **1.** Archie Moore fought Ezzard Charles (three times), Rocky Marciano, Floyd Patterson, and Cassius Clay (before he became known as Muhammad Ali). Moore lost all six fights. **2.** Ed "Too Tall" Jones of the Dallas Cowboys had six fights in a brief career that lasted from Nov. 3, 1979, to Jan. 26, 1980. His record was 6-0 (with five knockouts) against mediocre opposition. **3.** Lou Savarese and Alex Stewart each fought Tyson, Holyfield, and Foreman but couldn't beat them. Stewart fought Holyfield twice.

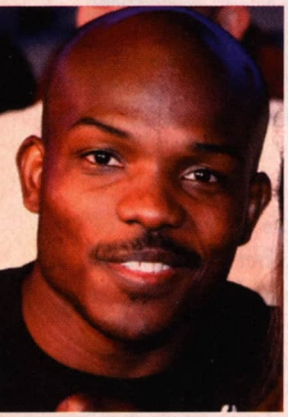
Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at **thauser@rcn.com**. His most recent book (*Winks and Daggers: An Inside Look at Another Year in Boxing*) was published by the University of Arkansas Press.

PLAYLIST THE BANDS AND SINGERS BOXING PEOPLE ARE LISTENING TO.

AMIR KHAN

Survivor ("Eye Of The Tiger"), Jay Sean, 50 Cent, P. Diddy

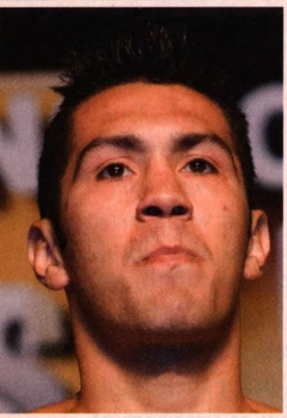
"Of course, you have got that Rocky song that everyone listens to. That's always on my playlist. I use the same CD whenever I'm in training. I've got a couple of Jay Sean tracks on there. He's a friend of mine from England. There are a couple of 50 Cent songs and P. Diddy songs on there. But you start out with your mellow tunes to chill out and be mellow before you really start warming up. As you warm up, the songs get kind of harder and quicker. That's when I start using more songs to get me geared up and keyed up."



TIM BRADLEY

Darren Hughes ("Blood, Sweat and Tears")

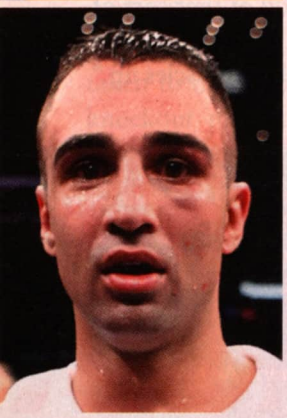
"He's an artist, but he's not well known. That's my song right there. I used it for every fight besides my last one. That's the one that gets me hyped up and motivated. It goes all the way down to my spirit and to my bones, man, it gives me chills when I'm coming out. It feels like God is with me and it feels like everybody is with me. When I hear the lyrics and the song and the beats and everything, it makes me want to go crazy. That's why I love it, man."



VICENTE ESCOBEDO

Afrika Bambaata ("Planet Rock"), Stevie B, Phil Collins

"I like the stuff from the 1980s. It's kind of my thing, I like to dance. I like to get fired up and then go out there and fight."



PAULIE MALIGNAGGI

Eminem ("The Sauce"), Mötley Crüe ("Kick Start My Heart"), DMX ("Bring Your Hole Crew"), DMX ("Stop Being Greedy"), Cypress Hill ("Rock Super Star")

10 A MONTHLY BOXING LIST.

THIS MONTH: FIGHTERS WHO HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN MULTIPLE RING MAGAZINE FIGHTS OF THE YEAR.

6 – MUHAMMAD ALI
(JONES, 1963; LISTON, 1964; FRAZIER, 1971; FOREMAN, 1974; FRAZIER, 1975; SPINKS, 1978)

5 – CARMEN BASILIO
(DEMARCO, 1955; SAXTON, 1956; ROBINSON, 1957; ROBINSON, 1958; FULLMER, 1959)

4 – JOE FRAZIER
(QUARRY, 1969; ALI, 1971; FOREMAN, 1973; ALI, 1975)

4 – GEORGE FOREMAN
(FRAZIER, 1973; ALI, 1974; LYLE, 1976; YOUNG, 1977)

4 – ARTURO GATTI
(RUELAS, 1997; ROBINSON, 1998; WARD, 2002; WARD, 2003)

3 – ROCKY GRAZIANO
(COCHRANE, 1945; ZALE, 1946; ZALE, 1947)

3 – TONY ZALE
(GRAZIANO, 1946; GRAZIANO, 1947; CERDAN, 1948)

3 – ROCKY MARCIANO
(WALCOTT, 1952; LA STARZA, 1953; CHARLES, 1954)

3 – MICKEY WARD
(AUGUSTUS, 2001; GATTI, 2002; GATTI, 2003)

2 – 14 TIED

NOTE: *ALI WAS CASSIUS CLAY VS. JONES AND LISTON*

Images: Ed Mulholland, Fightwire, Tom Hogan,

GOOD, BAD, WORSE

THE BEST AND WORST IN BOXING FROM THE PAST MONTH.

GOOD

Floyd Mayweather Jr. is anything but an angel, as his impending jail term for domestic violence makes clear. He surprises us sometimes, though. His assistant, David Levi, took part in a charity event in which money was being raised to help pay the medical bills for an 11-month-old with a heart abnormality that reached almost $50,000, more than the family could pay. "(Mayweather) asked me what the charity was for," said Levi. "I told him. And he said, 'Just let them know that I'll take care of all of the medical bills.'"

BAD

Juan Manuel Lopez and Orlando Salido gave us a war to remember in their rematch March 10 in Puerto Rico, Salido emerging with a 10th-round technical-knockout victory when referee Roberto Ramirez Sr. stopped the fight after a brutal knockdown. Lopez then recklessly suggested that Ramirez Sr. awarded the victory to Salido because of gambling problems, implying that Ramirez was somehow paid off. Lopez later apologized but was suspended by Puerto Rican boxing authorities.

Image: Tom Hogan-Hogan Photos

WORSE

Eloy Perez had dreams of beating Adrien Broner on Feb. 25 and then going on to great things. Instead, he endured a nightmare. Broner made him look amateurish before knocking him down and out with two devastating rights in the fourth round on national television, Perez's first defeat as a pro. Then things got worse. Perez tested positive for cocaine, prompting his management firm to dump him. Golden Boy promotions, his promoter, has stuck with him but he'll need to get help. Sad story.

RING POLL

A MONTHLY POLL OF OUR RINGTV.COM READERS. THIS MONTH: WHO IS MOST LIKELY TO TAKE OVER AS THE POUND-FOR-POUND KING AFTER MANNY PACQUIAO AND FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR. ARE GONE FROM THE SCENE?

Image: Naoki Fukuda

THE PERCENTAGES:

NONITO DONAIRE	36.4
ANDRE WARD	29.4
OTHER	7.9
ADRIEN BRONER	7.1
YURIORKIS GAMBOA	5.8
LUCIAN BUTE	3.9
BRANDON RIOS	3.8
TIMOTHY BRADLEY	2.3
GARY RUSSELL JR.	1.4
ABNER MARES	1.1
CHAD DAWSON	0.9
ANSELMO MORENO	0.1

***NOTE:** 2,225 READERS VOTED IN THIS POLL.*

Former junior middleweight titleholder **Fernando Vargas** was known for his fire.

Image: **Mike Fiala-AFP-Getty Images**

FERNANDO VARGAS

By **Lem Satterfield**

Fernando Vargas developed a large and passionate fan base as a result of his all-around ability and the fire that burned inside him.

Vargas, a 1996 U.S. Olympian, scored a seventh-round stoppage over Yori Boy Campas in 1998 to become the youngest junior middleweight titleholder ever, picking up the IBF belt just five days after his 21st birthday. It is a mark that stood until Saul Alvarez won the WBC title in 2011 at age 20.

"El Feroz" successfully defended the title five times, including victories over Winky Wright and Ike Quartey in 1999 and 2000, propelling him to star status and even bigger fights.

Vargas (26-5, 22 knockouts) lost his title when he was stopped by Felix Trinidad in the 12th round of a memorable matchup in 2000 and would have mixed results after that, including losses to Oscar De La Hoya, Shane Mosley and Ricardo Mayorga.

However, the name Fernando Vargas still brings smiles to those who appreciate a skillful boxer who fights his heart out every time he steps into the ring. In this feature, Vargas revealed to THE RING the best he faced in 10 categories:

BEST OVERALL: IKE QUARTEY

Ike had the complete package as a fighter. He could punch, he could box, he was intelligent, he had good defense and a good jab. Even though I out-jabbed him, I would say he was the best overall that I faced.

BEST BOXER: WINKY WRIGHT

Probably Winky. He was just a crafty fighter. To be the champ, you got to beat the champ, and I never have lost to a southpaw. But this guy was an awesome fighter and he's an awesome person. But I really had to work hard to win that fight because of his boxing skills.

BEST JAB: QUARTEY

He had a quick jab, even though I was able to out-jab him. It was a sneaky sort of jab.

BEST PUNCHER: FELIX TRINIDAD

That had to be Trinidad. I never have been hit like that. When I fought him, and he hit me, I felt like I was being hit with bricks. It was like the guy wasn't human.

FASTEST FEET: SHANE MOSLEY

He was so quick, really quick on his feet and quick on his pivots.

FASTEST HANDS: MOSLEY

Probably Shane. It was like, every time I threw a punch, I knew that he was going to be ready to counter. He could counter really fast, so whenever I threw a punch, I knew that I had to watch for that.

BEST DEFENSE: WRIGHT

Definitely Winky Wright. I was able to beat him, but he was a tough southpaw that I, like a lot of people, couldn't hit. Trinidad, guys like that had a hard time – like I did – penetrating what was like a peek-a-boo defense. That's what it was.

BEST CHIN: RAYMOND JOVAL

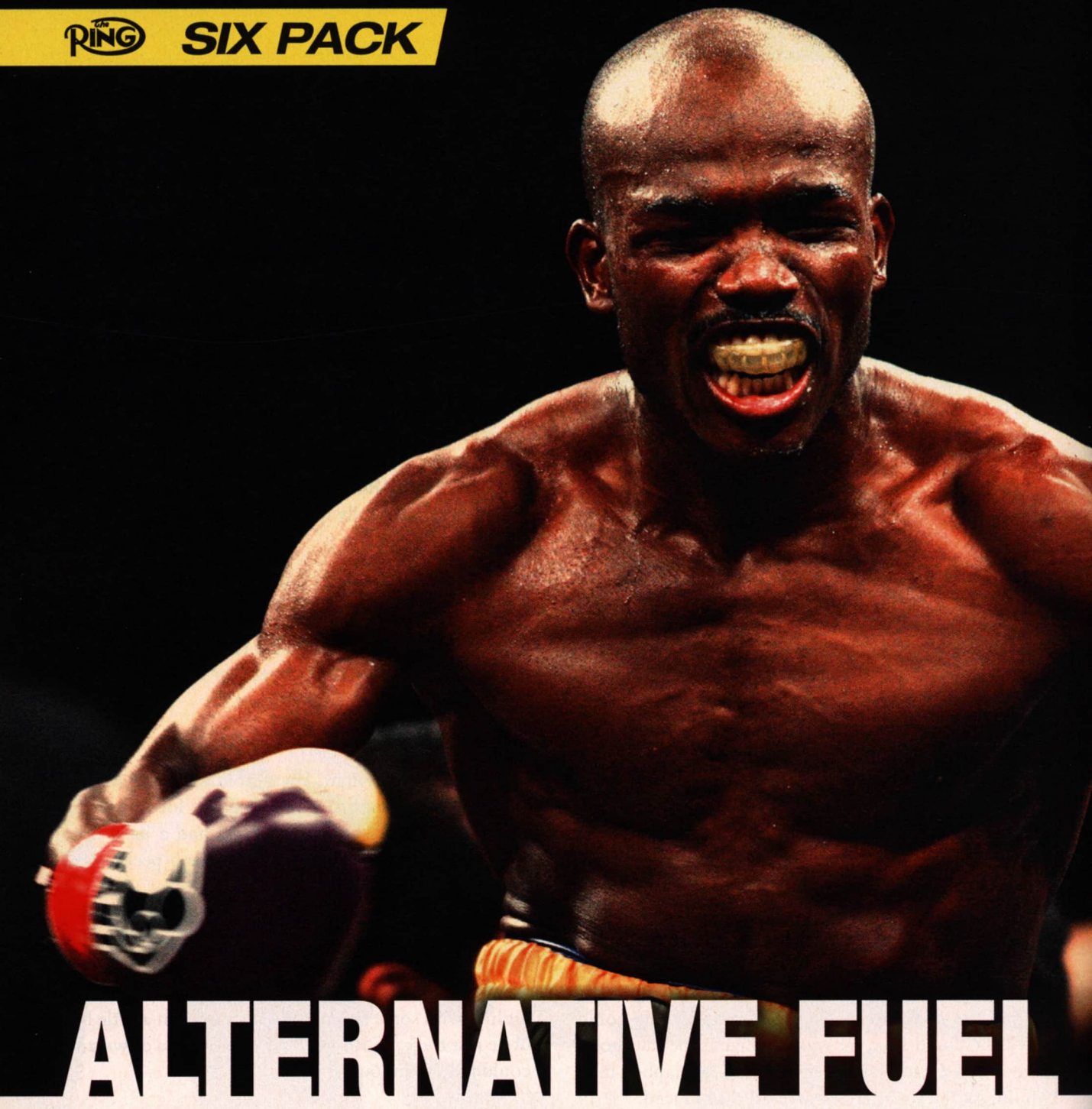
This guy, I hit him with everything, including the kitchen sink, you know, but he didn't go anywhere. I mean, I hit him with some shots, and I buckled him a little bit, but he just took it. This guy just wouldn't go down and I couldn't get him out of there.

SMARTEST: WRIGHT

That would be Winky again. Just a very, very intelligent fighter.

STRONGEST: TRINIDAD

That had to be Trinidad. Up until that fight, I had never felt anybody like that in my life. ■



ALTERNATIVE FUEL

TIMOTHY BRADLEY GOES THE VEGETARIAN ROUTE FOR HIS TRAINING DIET

By **T.K. Stewart**

Boxers have always been known as the meat-and-potatoes and bacon-and-eggs type of guys. Hearty meals full of calories and protein have traditionally been the fuel that has propelled champions since men began challenging others with their fists.

However, Timothy Bradley, who faces Manny Pacquiao on June 9 in Las Vegas, is one fighter who has dared to buck the centuries-old trend. When Bradley is in training for a fight, he opts for the plant-based vegan diet. That means no meat, no fish, no chicken, no dairy products and no eggs.

For many, a vegan diet would not be a practical lifestyle consideration; processed foods, dairy products and meat are the basic staples of most people's diets. Those foods are distinctly off limits to vegans.

Vegans follow a strict form of vegetarian diet in which they ab-

A strict vegan diet has worked for **Timothy Bradley**.

Image: **Bryan Crowe-Fightwireimages**

stain from any food that originates with an animal. That means they eat primarily fruits, vegetables, plenty of leafy greens, whole grains, nuts, seeds and legumes.

Bradley will eat what he terms "normal food" when he is not in training, but once he enters into training camp for his bouts, the vegan diet begins.

"It's the best," says Bradley, who has utilized the diet for all of his world title fights. "It's the most unbelievable way to eat and I feel so good. But it's sometimes hard for me to eat that way, because I'm a carnivore; I like meat, I like sushi and I like fish. But it's the cleanest way to eat, I feel good and I can cut weight very, very quickly."

The results speak for themselves. Bradley (28-0, 12 knockouts) is undefeated, has won three junior welterweight titles and is No. 8 on THE RING's pound-for-pound list.

And he is a striking physical specimen – muscular but lean.

"The reason I love this type of diet," he said, "is because I feel connected to the world, my thoughts are clear and I'm just sharper, you know? I feel clean and I can eat whenever I want. It's a good feeling, it's just a good feeling."

Bradley is constantly bombarded by questions about his protein sources and whether he is able to consume enough. He has a ready answer. "Tempeh is my favorite," he responds.

Tempeh is a soy-based product that originated in Indonesia, made with fermented beans pressed into cake-like forms. Think of it as a veggie burger loaded with nutrients. Eight ounces of tempeh contains high levels of dietary fiber and vitamins, as well as approximately 40 grams of protein, so a few servings per day satisfy the protein requirements of even a world class athlete.

Some are not entirely sold on the health benefits, especially for athletes involved in endurance sports that deplete vitamins and minerals from the body. The detractors claim vegan bodies can be robbed of iron, vitamin B12 and calcium if they are not consuming animal-based protein.

Dr. Ben Kim, a physician who has studied nutrition extensively, said vegans should be cautious.

"My experiences in providing health care to many people over the years have led me to believe that long term, a strict vegan diet is likely to lead to the development of nutritional deficiencies and significant health problems for most people," he said. "I believe that people can survive for many years on a strict vegan diet, but almost always with one or more significant health problems."

Joel Diaz, Bradley's trainer, said his fighter's diet has made it very easy for him to make weight. He said Bradley has never had to resort to extreme measures to make weight, as so many fighters seem to do.

"It will be no problem," said Diaz, who will oversee an eight-week training camp.

Bradley is not the first world class boxer to adopt the diet. Former middleweight titleholder Keith Holmes is a strict vegan and an open advocate of the benefits. Of course, should Bradley upset Pacquiao, then he will likely become the poster boy for vegans everywhere.

Bradley laughs at that notion but is a passionate believer in the diet.

"I have more energy and I just feel unbelievable," he said.

Who knows? Perhaps fighters of the future will feast not on rib-eye steaks but on tempeh and tofu. ■

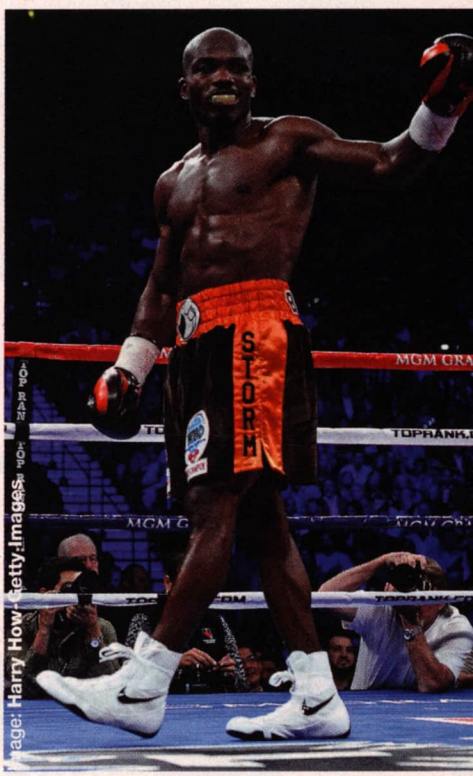


Image: Harry How-Getty Images

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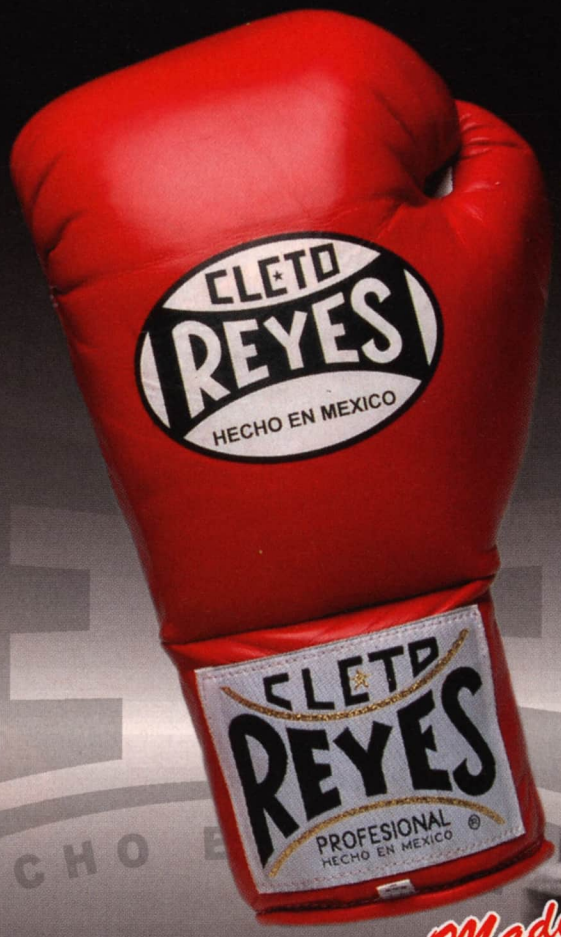

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Randy Neumann takes charge of finances as he does his duties as a referee. Image: Ed Mulholland-Fightwireimages

PLANNING AHEAD

RANDY NEUMANN IS A HEAVYWEIGHT IN THE WORLD OF FINANCE

By: **Corey Erdman**

Randy Neumann worked toward a business degree at Fairleigh Dickenson University in his native New Jersey during the time he was exchanging punches with some of the best heavyweights in the world, enjoying victories over Jimmy Young and Chuck Wepner. So after a pair of TKO losses, Neumann knew he could walk away with a skill set that would help him thrive.

And that certainly has been the case. Neumann, who also became a noted boxing official, heads up Randy Neumann Wealth Management when he's not inside the squared circle. As a financial planner, his company handles more than $80 million in assets. And he has become an authority on fiscal responsibility, penning two books on the topic.

"While I was fighting, I did a lot of TV commercials, and I wrote a lot of magazine articles, so I continued freelancing, which you can do forever, but you can't make any money at it. Then my wife got pregnant, so then I took a job as a branch manager at a bank in my hometown," said Neumann, who compiled a record of 31-7 (11 knockouts) as a pro.

The New Jersey native stayed with the bank for a year and a half, during which he found trouble for marrying his two passions while on the job. One afternoon a gentleman found out that floating a bad check and then making a run for it is ill-advised when a former RING Top 10 heavyweight is behind the counter.

"I was only in my early 30s, so I ran him down, threw him against the bus (and) he hit the floor. There was a cop right there, so there was a big story. One of the board members calls me and says, 'Hey Randy, we don't hire our branch managers to be security,'" Neumann said.

After reading a Wall Street Journal article on financial planners during the industry's infancy, Neumann decided he would prefer to be his own boss. Thirty-three years later he still is, which has allowed him to continue refereeing. He has overseen 48 title bouts in his career.

But perhaps his proudest achievement is bringing boxing and finances together—without having to pummel a criminal.

Neumann helped devise one of the first pension plans for boxers, helping establish the IBF Retirement Fund in 1993. Now, when fighters compete for an IBF title, 3 percent of their purse goes into an account, payable at the age of 35.

Having been in the boxing business since his pro debut as a fighter in 1969, the 64-year old Neumann is acutely aware of the financial hardships of many fighters, particularly the ones below the championship level who make relatively little money.

"The talent side comes and goes, and they're mostly uneducated. They don't know that the money will ever stop coming in," Neumann said. "Part of that is in the psyche. If you're an athlete or an actor, you don't ever think you're going to get old or become untalented. So you spend what you make.

"Especially for athletes and actors, they're going to have relatively short careers, so they better put their money away."

Certainly, not everyone who laces up a pair of gloves will be as cash-savvy as Neumann, but at least they know where to turn if they need someone to lend a hand. ■

A TAXING MONTH

By **Brian Harty**

This must have been what the 20th-century mystic **Weird Al Yankovic** was prophesying when he sang about "Pacman" to the tune of "Taxman": Welterweight icon **Manny Pacquiao** is in trouble with the Philippines-equivalent of the IRS for not complying with requests to see records of his income. He reportedly came under scrutiny when his tax payments went from more than 100 million pesos in 2008 to just 7 million in 2009, and now the investigators are particularly interested to see how much money he made in 2010, both from endorsements and from his fights against **Joshua Clottey** and **Antonio Margarito**. Speculation about the audit ranges from bad recordkeeping and greedy advisors to a power-check from the current administration to keep congressman Manny in line, while others say that Pacquiao really might be hiding money problems. Many close to him, including trainer **Freddie Roach**, have commented before on Pacquiao's sieve-like wallet, which they say is a direct result of his inability to turn anyone away. Pacquiao has not been accused of tax evasion yet, but if it gets that far, he could face up to two years in jail. To make things a bit worse, Pacquiao was accused in March of housing fugitive **Mohammad "Bong" Akia**, former head of the Presidential Anti-Smuggling Group, whose hobby on the side is selling stolen cars. One would think a general rule for politicians would be not letting a guy nicknamed "Bong" crash at your mansion, but like Roach said, the man can't say no. Maybe it means we'll get Pacquiao vs. Mayweather as an underground prison fight if they can decide how to split up the cigarettes and Twinkies. ...

To paraphrase Forrest Gump: Sometimes a box of chocolates turns out to be a box of crap assembled by a shady matchmaker. Such was the case for the 12th "Pinoy Pride" event March 3 in Tagbilaran City, Philippines, in which local featherweight star **Rey "Boom Boom" Bautista** was to take on Mexican **Genaro Garcia** in front of 30,000 fans. Everything seemed to be going as planned, but then people began to notice strange things about Garcia. First, he stepped off the plane alone – no trainer. Second, he seemed to be confused about his own identity. Yes, his name was Genaro Garcia and he was a boxer, but he wasn't too clear on his supposed record or weight class. Before long the event planners, **ALA Promotions**, realized this wasn't the Genaro Garcia that they had ordered. They thought they were getting the Garcia ("Poblanito") who had faced the likes of **Hozumi Hasegawa, Toshiaki Nishioka** and **Wilfredo Vazquez Jr.** – a tough opponent with a 38-8 record who had fought for a world title three times. The Garcia they got ("Panterita") had won three times in his past 11 fights. It was too late for a replacement, though, so the show went on. After a first round in which Bautista wrestled with the moral implications of Panterita-abuse, his corner convinced him to end everyone's misery, which he easily did in the second round with a few body shots. ALA refunded everyone's money and said it intends to sue **Hugo Correa**, the Mexican matchmaker who set up the switcheroo. ...

The weirdness surrounding **Vitali Klitschko's** heavyweight title fight in Munich against **Dereck Chisora** began at the weigh-in, when British bandito Chisora slapped Klitschko across the face. Klitschko subsequently slapped an 'L' onto Chisora's record. Then, at the post-fight press conference, things got nasty. First, Chisora spit water in the face of Vitali's brother, **Wladimir**. Next, from the crowd came the bleats of erstwhile heavyweight **David Haye**, and when Chisora left the podium to confront him, a flail of fists, camera tripods and ass-capping threats resulted. German police detained Chisora for questioning while Haye hopped a flight back to England, and soon both fighters were releasing statements to explain themselves. Vitali Klitschko, true to his Ph.D., made a statement expressing his psychological need to punish Chisora. Others did it for him, though, as the WBC banned Chisora and the BBBoC revoked his license. Another bizarre chapter came later, when cruiserweight-turned-heavyweight-

Manny Pacquiao has had a rough stretch outside the ring lately. Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

turned-cruiserweight **Marco Huck** was served with a German court order forbidding him to discuss the Klitschkos' affairs in public. Huck had apparently insinuated (in public) that Klitschko's manager, **Bernd Boente**, had hatched the weigh-in stunt with Chisora as headline bait. The penalty for violating the order? Up to 250,000 euros or six months in jail. Vitali summed it up nicely on his management company's website: "*In the future, Huck will think before (he opens his) mouth.*" ...

Former light heavyweight titleholder **Julio Gonzalez** was killed at the age of 35 by a hit-and-run driver while riding his motorcycle in Mexico. A rugged workman in the ring, Gonzalez won a tremendous battle with **Julian Letterlough** on Friday *Night Fights* in 2001, went the distance with a prime **Roy Jones** Jr. the same year, and in 2003 beat 48-0 **Dariusz Michalczewski** to win the WBO belt – highlights of a career in which he faced nearly every major contender in his division. ...

At **Muhammad Ali's** celebrity-studded 70th birthday blowout in Las Vegas in February, UFC co-owner **Lorenzo Fertitta** reportedly paid $1.1 million for the gloves Ali wore in his 1965 world title fight against **Floyd Patterson**. Yeah, that's a lot of money and probably a record of some kind, but what's really worth remembering is where those gloves have been. They were on the hands of a man who was fighting for only the second time as Muhammad Ali, which his opponent refused to call him, choosing instead words like "disgrace to his race" and hyping the fight by saying that he would bring the title "back to America." For 12 drawn-out rounds, those gloves became intimate with every surface of Patterson's face as Ali assaulted him with cries of "What's my name?" And after the referee finally stepped in to put a stop to the punishment and police filled the ring to keep order, those gloves were raised above a celebrity-studded crowd that booed, and they left on the hands of the man who had reminded everyone before the fight, "I'm an American, too." ■

Height: 5-foot-4 **Weight:** 101 pounds
Measurements: 33-23-34
Stance: Orthodox
Reach: 24 inches
Favorite Boxer: Manny Pacquiao
Current Location: Las Vegas
Where you've seen her: *MANswers* on Spike TV, HBO's *Entourage*, FHM, Maxim, American Curves, Corona/Showtime Boxing Ring Girl
Booking Info:
bookCorissaFurr@gmail.com,
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PHOTO: **ANDREW HO**

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THE RING CARD GIRL OF THE MONTH BY: **HEATHER SHANHOLTZ**

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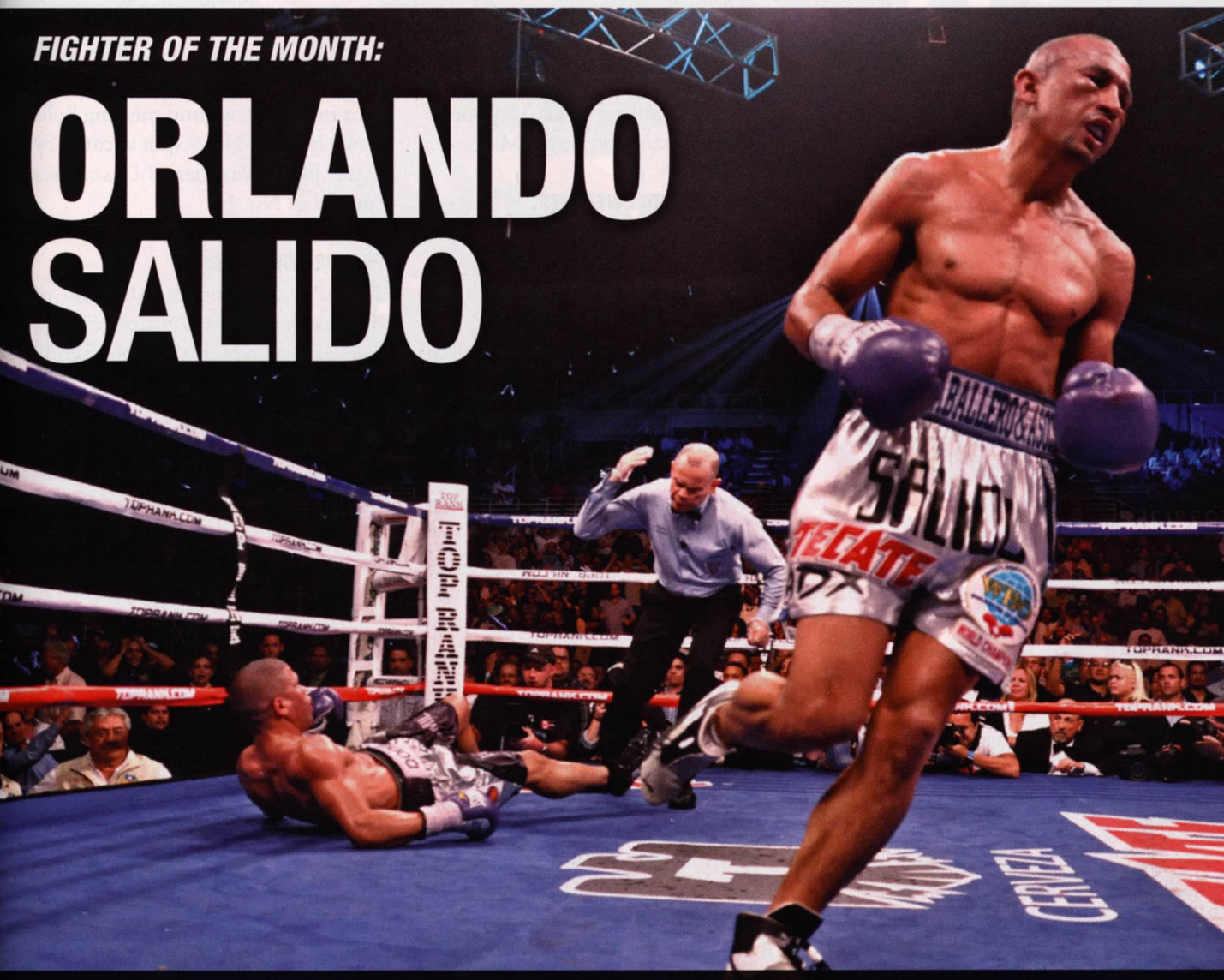
FIGHTER OF THE MONTH:

ORLANDO SALIDO



Orlando Salido proved his knockout of **Juan Manuel Lopez** last year was no fluke by doing it again on March 10.
Image: **Peter Amador-Top Rank**

Orlando Salido's stunning eighth-round knockout of then-unbeaten Juan Manuel Lopez last year in Lopez's home country of Puerto Rico was a fluke in the eyes of many.

After all, Salido was a tough veteran but he had 11 losses and had just been dominated by Yuriorkis Gamboa seven months earlier. Plus, Lopez, it was said, had many distractions going into that fight.

Consensus was that Lopez would bounce back with a resounding victory in their rematch on March 10 in San Juan, particularly after Salido struggled to beat Weng Haya in his previous fight.

Surprise! The 31-year-old Mexican survived a knockdown in the fifth to stop Lopez again, this time in the 10th round of one of the most-thrilling fights in recent memory.

Lopez's demise came at the end of a brutal four-punch combination that put him down and hurt him badly. He was on wobbly legs when referee Roberto Ramirez Sr. ended the fight, thus saving him from further damage.

Think about what Salido has accomplished: two knockout victories over a fighter many had on their short pound-for-pound lists – in that fighter's backyard. That's about as impressive as it gets.

Experts can argue about where Salido ranks among today's best fighters but his stock has soared in the past year. And one thing is certain: He is among the most exciting fighters on earth. ■

POUND FOR POUND:
Pongsaklek Wonjongkam (No. 8 last month) went down three times on his way to a sixth-round upset loss to Sonny Boy Jaro (unrated last month). Wonjongkam dropped out of the Top 10, pulling Timothy Bradley (No. 9 last month) and Vitali Klitschko (No. 10 last month) up one notch each. The newest addition to the list was featherweight Yuriorkis Gamboa, who entered at No. 10.

HEAVYWEIGHTS:
No change.

CRUISERWEIGHTS:
Ola Afolabi (No. 6 last month) continued his impressive run by stopping unrated Valery Brudov to leapfrog into the No. 4 spot, pushing Antonio Tarver (No. 4 last month) and Giacobbe Fragomeni (No. 5 last month) down one position each. Marco Huck was removed from his No. 1 spot in the cruiserweight ratings in January because of stated intentions to campaign at heavyweight. After falling to Alexander Povetkin, however, Huck announced that he would return to cruiserweight. He re-entered the ratings at No. 1, pushing everyone else down a notch and Alexander Alekseev (No. 10 last month) out. Then Fragomeni fought to a draw with journeyman Silvio Branco, falling to No. 9 and pushing Guillermo Jones and Lateef Kayode back up to their original positions of No. 7 and No. 8, respectively.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS:
No change.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS:
No change.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS:
Grzegorz Proksa (No. 4 last month) lost an upset to unheralded Brit Kerry Hope and fell all the way to the precipice at No. 10, whille Matthew Macklin (No. 3 last month) fell to No. 6 after succumbing in the 11th round to RING champion Sergio Martinez.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS:
No change.

WELTERWEIGHTS:
Devon Alexander (unrated last month) turned in a striking debut at welterweight with a dominating decision over Marcos Maidana (unrated last month) and entered the ratings at No. 10, replacing longtime fixture Shane Mosley. After a solid win over Matthew Hatton, Kell Brook (No. 6 last month) climbed a notch, trading places with Vyacheslav Senchenko (No. 5 last month).

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS:
After the loss to Alexander, Maidana went back down in weight and re-entered the ratings at No. 9, pushing Vernon Paris (No. 9 last month) down one space and Humberto Soto (No. 10 last month) out.

LIGHTWEIGHTS:
Ricky Burns (No. 7 last month) scored a convincing unanimous decision over Paulus Moses (No. 6 last month) in Scotland. Burns rose to No. 5, pushing Kevin Mitchell (No. 5 last month) down a notch, while Moses fell to No. 10, lifting those in between up one space each.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS:
Adrien Broner (No. 5 last month) made his fourth-round KO of Eloy Perez (No. 9 last month) look spectacularly easy. Broner climbed to No. 3, pushing Roman Martinez (No. 3 last month) and Takahiro Ao (No. 4 last month) down a notch each, while Perez dropped out. At the same time, Juan Carlos Burgos (No. 10 last month) outpointed veteran Cristobal Cruz, jumping over Jorge Solis (No. 8 last month) to take his spot in the ratings and pushing Solis down into the No. 9 spot vacated by Perez. Bryan Vazquez of Costa Rica entered at No. 10.

FEATHERWEIGHTS:
There was a complete shakeup of the featherweight division after a weekend in which Orlando Salido (No. 3 last month) stopped Juan Manuel Lopez (No. 4 last month) again in their rematch, Mikey Garcia (No. 8 last month) stopped unrated Bernabe Concepcion, and Billy Dib (No. 9 last month) knocked out unrated Eduardo Escobedo. See page 38 for the results.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS:
No change.

BANTAMWEIGHTS:
No change.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS:
No change.

FLYWEIGHTS:
Wonjongkam (champion last month) is still the current record holder with a staggering 575 weeks in THE RING's ratings, but he gave up the top spot to Jaro (unrated last month) and fell to No. 5. That meant everyone from No. 5 downward slipped a notch, and Edgar Sosa (No. 10 last month) fell off the list.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS:
Masayuki Kuroda (No. 4 last month) switched places with Kompayak Porpramook (No. 5 last month) after drawing with unrated Ryoichi Taguchi.

STRAWWEIGHTS:
No change.

▶ **Sergio Martinez** (right) started slowly against **Matthew Macklin** but finished with an impressive 11th-round knockout on March 17. Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT UNLIMITED

C **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine | 57-3-0 (50 KOs)

1. **VITALI KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine | 44-2-0 (40 KOs)

2. **ALEXANDER POVETKIN**
Russia | 2-0-0 (16 KOs)

3. **TOMASZ ADAMEK**
Poland | 44-2-0 (28 KOs)

4. **ALEXANDER DIMITRENKO**
Ukraine | 32-1-0 (21 KOs)

5. **ROBERT HELENIUS**
Finland | 17-0-0 (11 KOs)

6. **DENIS BOYTSOV**
Russia | 30-0-0 (25 KOs)

7. **RUSLAN CHAGAEV**
Uzbekistan | 28-2-1 (17 KOs)

8. **CHRIS ARREOLA**
U.S. | 35-2-0 (30 KOs)

9. **KUBRAT PULEV**
Bulgaria | 15-0-0 (7 KOs)

10. **TYSON FURY**
UK | 17-0-0 (12 KOs)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 200 LBS

C **YOAN PABLO HERNANDEZ**
Cuba | 26-1-0 (13 KOs)

1. **MARCO HUCK**
Germany | 34-2-0 (25 KOs)

2. **KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK**
Poland | 46-2-1 (33 KOs)

3. **STEVE CUNNINGHAM**
U.S. | 24-4-0 (12 KOs)

4. **DENIS LEBEDEV**
Russia | 23-1-0 (17 KOs)

5. **OLA AFOLABI**
UK | 19-2-3 (9 KOs)

6. **ANTONIO TARVER**
U.S. | 29-6-0 (20 KOs)

7. **GUILLERMO JONES**
Panama | 38-3-2 (30 KOs)

8. **LATEEF KAYODE**
Nigeria | 18-0-0 (14 KOs)

9. **GIACOBBE FRAGOMENI**
Italy | 29-3-2 (12 KOs)

10. **MATEUSZ MASTERNAK**
Poland | 25-0-0 (19 KOs)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 175 LBS

C **BERNARD HOPKINS**
U.S. | 52-6-2 (32 KOs)

1. **JEAN PASCAL**
Canada | 26-2-1 (16 KOs)

2. **CHAD DAWSON**
U.S. | 31-1-0 (18 KOs)

3. **TAVORIS CLOUD**
U.S. | 24-0-0 (19 KOs)

4. **NATHAN CLEVERLY**
UK | 24-0-0 (11 KOs)

5. **ADRIAN DIACONU**
Romania | 27-3-0 (15 KOs)

6. **ZSOLT ERDEI**
Hungary | 33-0-0 (18 KOs)

7. **GABRIEL CAMPILLO**
Spain | 21-4-1 (8 KOs)

8. **BEIBUT SHUMENOV**
Kazakhstan | 12-1-0 (8 KOs)

9. **KARO MURAT**
Germany | 24-1-1 (14 KOs)

10. **ISMAYL SILLAKH**
Ukraine | 17-0-0 (14 KOs)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 168 LBS

C **ANDRE WARD**
U.S. | 25-0-0 (13 KOs)

1. **LUCIAN BUTE**
Romania | 30-0-0 (24 KOs)

2. **MIKKEL KESSLER**
Denmark | 44-2-0 (33 KOs)

3. **CARL FROCH**
UK | 28-2-0 (20 KOs)

4. **ROBERT STIEGLITZ**
Russia | 41-2-0 (23 KOs)

5. **SAKIO BIKA**
Cameroon | 29-5-2 (20 KOs)

6. **THOMAS OOSTHUIZEN**
South Africa | 18-0-1 (13 KOs)

7. **GEORGE GROVES**
UK | 14-0-0 (11 KOs)

8. **GLEN JOHNSON**
Jamaica | 51-15-2 (35 KOs)

9. **ANDRE DIRRELL**
U.S. | 20-1-0 (14 KOs)

10. **ARTHUR ABRAHAM**
Armenia | 33-3-0 (27 KOs)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 160 LBS

C **SERGIO MARTINEZ**
Argentina | 49-2-2 (28 KOs)

1. **DANIEL GEALE**
Australia | 27-1-0 (15 KOs)
2. **FELIX STURM**
Germany | 36-2-2 (15 KOs)
3. **JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ JR.**
Mexico | 45-0-1 (31 KOs)
4. **SEBASTIAN ZBIK**
Germany | 30-1-0 (10 KOs)
5. **DMITRY PIROG**
Russia | 19-0-0 (15 KOs)
6. **MATTHEW MACKLIN**
UK | 28-4-0 (19 KOs)
7. **HASSAN N'DAM N'JIKAM**
France | 26-0-0 (17 KOs)
8. **MARTIN MURRAY**
UK | 23-0-1 (10 KOs)
9. **GENNADY GOLOVKIN**
Kazakhstan | 22-0-0 (19 KOs)
10. **GRZEGORZ PROKSA**
Poland | 26-1-0 (19 KOs)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 154 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **MIGUEL COTTO**
Puerto Rico | 37-2-0 (30 KOs)
2. **SAUL ALVAREZ**
Mexico | 39-0-1 (29 KOs)
3. **VANES MARTIROSYAN**
U.S. | 32-0-0 (20 KOs)
4. **ERISLANDY LARA**
Cuba | 15-1-1 (10 KOs)
5. **CARLOS MOLINA**
Mexico | 19-4-2 (6 KOs)
6. **JAMES KIRKLAND**
U.S. | 30-1-0 (27 KOs)
7. **PAUL WILLIAMS**
U.S. | 41-2-0 (27 KOs)
8. **ALFREDO ANGULO**
Mexico | 20-2-0 (17 KOs)
9. **CORNELIUS BUNDRAGE**
U.S. | 31-4-0 (18 KOs)
10. **SERGIY DZINZIRUK**
Ukraine | 37-1-0 (23 KOs)

WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 147 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
Philippines | 54-3-2 (38 KOs)
2. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.**
U.S. | 42-0-0 (26 KOs)
3. **VICTOR ORTIZ**
U.S. | 29-3-2 (22 KOs)
4. **ANDRE BERTO**
U.S. | 28-1-0 (22 KOs)
5. **KELL BROOK**
UK | 27-0-0 (18 KOs)
6. **VYACHESLAV SENCHENKO**
Ukraine | 32-0-0 (21 KOs)
7. **MIKE JONES**
U.S. | 26-0-0 (19 KOs)
8. **JAN ZAVECK**
Slovenia | 31-2-0 (18 KOs)
9. **SELCUK AYDIN**
Turkey | 23-0-0 (17 KOs)
10. **DEVON ALEXANDER**
U.S. | 23-1-0 (13 KOs)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 140 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY**
U.S. | 28-0-0 (12 KOs)
2. **LAMONT PETERSON**
U.S. | 30-1-1 (15 KOs)
3. **AMIR KHAN**
UK | 26-2-0 (18 KOs)
4. **LUCAS MATTHYSSE**
Argentina | 30-2-0 (28 KOs)
5. **ERIK MORALES**
Mexico | 52-7-0 (36 KOs)
6. **ZAB JUDAH**
U.S. | 41-7-0 (28 KOs)
7. **DANNY GARCIA**
U.S. | 22-0-0 (14 KOs)
8. **MIKE ALVARADO**
U.S. | 32-0-0 (23 KOs)
9. **MARCOS MAIDANA**
Argentina | 31-3-0 (28 KOs)
10. **VERNON PARIS**
U.S. | 26-0-0 (15 KOs)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 135 LBS

C **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico | 53-6-1 (39 KOs)

1. **BRANDON RIOS**
U.S. | 29-0-1 (22 KOs)
2. **ROBERT GUERRERO**
U.S. | 29-1-1 (18 KOs)
3. **ANTONIO DEMARCO**
Mexico | 27-2-1 (20 KOs)
4. **MIGUEL VAZQUEZ**
Mexico | 30-3-0 (13 KOs)
5. **RICKY BURNS**
UK | 34-2-0 (9 KOs)
6. **KEVIN MITCHELL**
UK | 33-1-0 (24 KOs)
7. **JOHN MURRAY**
UK | 31-1-0 (18 KOs)
8. **JOHN MOLINA**
U.S. | 23-1-0 (19 KOs)
9. **RICHARD ABRIL**
Cuba | 17-2-1 (8 KOs)
10. **PAULUS MOSES**
Namibia | 28-2-0 (19 KOs)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 130 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **TAKASHI UCHIYAMA**
Japan | 18-0-0 (15 KOs)
2. **JUAN CARLOS SALGADO**
Mexico | 24-1-1 (16 KOs)
3. **ADRIEN BRONER**
U.S. | 23-0-0 (19 KOs)
4. **ROMAN MARTINEZ**
Puerto Rico | 25-1-1 (16 KOs)
5. **TAKAHIRO AO**
Japan | 22-2-1 (10 KOs)
6. **DIEGO MAGDALENO**
U.S. | 21-0-0 (7 KOs)
7. **ARGENIS MENDEZ**
Dom. Rep. | 19-2-0 (10 KOs)
8. **JUAN CARLOS BURGOS**
Mexico | 29-1-0 (19 KOs)
9. **JORGE SOLIS**
Mexico | 40-4-2 (29 KOs)
10. **BRYAN VAZQUEZ**
Costa Rica | 28-0-0 (14 KOs)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 126 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **YURIORKIS GAMBOA**
Cuba | 21-0-0 (16 KOs)
2. **ORLANDO SALIDO**
Mexico | 38-11-2 (26 KOs)
3. **CHRIS JOHN**
Indonesia | 46-0-2 (22 KOs)
4. **JHONNY GONZALEZ**
Mexico | 51-7-0 (45 KOs)
5. **MIKEY GARCIA**
U.S. | 28-0-0 (24 KOs)
6. **BILL DIB**
Australia | 34-1-0 (21 KOs)
7. **JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ**
Puerto Rico | 31-2-0 (28 KOs)
8. **DANIEL PONCE DE LEON**
Mexico | 42-4-0 (35 KOs)
9. **CELESTINO CABALLERO**
Panama | 36-4-0 (23 KOs)
10. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico | 40-7-0 (36 KOs)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 122 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA**
Japan | 39-4-3 (24 KOs)
2. **GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX**
Cuba | 9-0-0 (7 KOs)
3. **NONITO DONAIRE**
Philippines | 28-1-0 (18 KOs))
4. **AKIFUMA SHIMODA**
Japan | 24-3-1 (10 KOs)
5. **P. KRATINGDAENGGYM**
Thailand | 45-2-0 (31 KOs)
6. **TAKALANI NDLOVU**
S. Africa | 33-6-0 (18 KOs)
7. **STEVE MOLITOR**
Canada | 34-2-0 (12 KOs)
8. **RICO RAMOS**
U.S. | 20-1-0 (11 KOs)
9. **MASAAKI SERIE**
Japan | 21-4-0 (9 KOs)
10. **WILFREDO VAZQUEZ JR.**
Puerto Rico | 21-2-1 (18 KOs)

HOW OUR RATINGS ARE COMPILED

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the Top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled by winning a box-off between THE RING's No. 1 and No. 2 contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our No. 1 and No. 3 contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division or is defeated in a championship bout.

THE RING Ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board, with the participation of THE RING Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world. To see the complete list of our panelists, click on RATINGS at RingTV.com.

Records provided by boxrec.com

BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 118 LBS

C VACANT

1. **ANSELMO MORENO**
   Panama | 32-1-1 (11 KOs)
2. **ABNER MARES**
   U.S. | 23-0-1 (13 KOs)
3. **JOSEPH AGBEKO**
   Ghana | 28-4-0 (22 KOs)
4. **ERIC MOREL**
   U.S. | 46-2-0 (23 KOs)
5. **VIC DARCHINYAN**
   Armenia | 37-4-1 (27 KOs)
6. **YONNHY PEREZ**
   Colombia | 20-2-1 (14 KOs)
7. **KOKI KAMEDA**
   Japan | 27-1-0 (17 KOs)
8. **MALCOLM TUNACAO**
   Philippines | 30-2-3 (19 KOs)
9. **SHINSUKE YAMANAKA**
   Japan | 15-0-2 (11 KOs)
10. **JORGE ARCE**
    Mexico | 60-6-2 (46 KOs)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 115 LBS

C VACANT

1. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
   Argentina | 35-1-2 (19 KOs)
2. **SURIYAN SOR RUNGVISAI**
   Thailand | 20-4-1 (7 KOs)
3. **TOMONOBU SHIMIZU**
   Japan | 19-3-1 (9 KOs)
4. **HUGO CAZARES**
   Mexico | 36-7-2 (26 KOs)
5. **TEPPARITH KOKIETGYM**
   Thailand | 19-2-0 (12 KOs)
6. **TOMAS ROJAS**
   Mexico | 38-13-1 (25 KOs)
7. **YOTA SATO**
   Japan | 23-2-1 (12 KOs)
8. **CESAR SEDA**
   Puerto Rico | 22-1-0 (16 KOs)
9. **NOBUO NASHIRO**
   Japan | 16-4-1 (10 KOs)
10. **JUAN CARLOS SANCHEZ**
    Mexico | 13-1-1 (7 KOs)

FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 112 LBS

C SONNY BOY JARO
Philippines | 34-10-5 (24 KOs)

1. **HERNAN MARQUEZ**
   Mexico | 32-2-0 (25 KOs)
2. **BRIAN VILORIA**
   U.S. | 30-3-0 (17 KOs)
3. **MORUTI MTHALANE**
   S. Africa | 28-2-0 (19 KOs)
4. **MILAN MELINDO**
   Philippines | 26-0-0 (10 KOs)
5. **P. WONJONGKAM**
   Thailand | 83-4-2 (44 KOs)
6. **ROCKY FUENTES**
   Philippines | 33-6-2 (20 KOs)
7. **JULIO CESAR MIRANDA**
   Mexico | 37-6-1 (29 KOs)
8. **LUIS CONCEPCION**
   Panama | 24-3-0 (19 KOs)
9. **JUAN CARLOS REVECO**
   Argentina | 27-1-0 (16 KOs)
10. **TOSHIYUKI IGARASHI**
    Japan | 15-1-1 (10 KOs)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 108 LBS

C VACANT

1. **ULISES SOLIS**
   Mexico | 34-2-3 (21 KOs)
2. **ROMAN GONZALEZ**
   Nicaragua | 31-0-0 (26 KOs)
3. **DONNIE NIETES**
   Philippines | 29-1-3 (16 KOs)
4. **KOMPAYAK PORPRAMOOK**
   Thailand | 44-3-0 (30 KOs)
5. **MASAYUKI KURODA**
   Japan | 21-3-0 (13 KOs)
6. **ADRIAN HERNANDEZ**
   Mexico | 22-2-1 (14 KOs)
7. **RYO MIYAZAKI**
   Japan | 16-0-3 (10 KOs)
8. **RAMON HIRALES**
   Mexico | 16-3-1 (9 KOs)
9. **JOHNRIEL CASIMERO**
   Philippines | 16-2-0 (10 KOs)
10. **GILBERTO KEB BAAS**
    Mexico | 35-22-4 (22 KOs)

STRAWWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 105 LBS

C VACANT

1. **NKOSINATHI JOYI**
   S. Africa | 21-0-0 (15 KOs)
2. **KAZUTO IOKA**
   Japan | 9-0-0 (6 KOs)
3. **MOISES FUENTES**
   Mexico | 14-1-0 (6 KOs)
4. **RAUL GARCIA**
   Mexico | 32-2-1 (20 KOs)
5. **JUAN PALACIOS**
   Nicaragua | 29-3-0 (22 KOs)
6. **WANHENG MENAYOTHIN**
   Thailand | 21-0-0 (6 KOs)
7. **DENVER CUELLO**
   Philippines | 30-4-6 (20 KOs)
8. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA**
   Japan | 24-4-0 (10 KOs)
9. **FLORANTE CONDES**
   Philippines | 25-6-1 (21 KOs)
10. **AKIRA YAEGASHI**
    Japan | 15-2-0 (8 KOs)

POUND FOR POUND

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
   Philippines | 54-3-2 (38 KOs) | WELTERWEIGHT
2. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR**
   U.S. | 42-0-0 (26 KOs) | WELTERWEIGHT
3. **SERGIO MARTINEZ**
   Argentina | 49-2-2 (28 KOs) | MIDDLEWEIGHT
4. **NONITO DONAIRE**
   Philippines | 28-1-0 (18 KOs) | JR. FEATHERWEIGHT
5. **ANDRE WARD**
   U.S. | 25-0-0 (13 KOs) | SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT
6. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
   Mexico | 53-6-1 (39 KOs) | LIGHTWEIGHT
7. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
   Ukraine | 57-3-0 (49 KOs) | HEAVYWEIGHT
8. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY**
   U.S. | 28-0-0 (12 KOs) | JR. WELTERWEIGHT
9. **VITALI KLITSCHKO**
   Ukraine | 44-2-0 (40 KOs) | HEAVYWEIGHT
10. **YURIORKIS GAMBOA**
    CUBA | 21-0-0 (16 KOS) | FEATHERWEIGHT

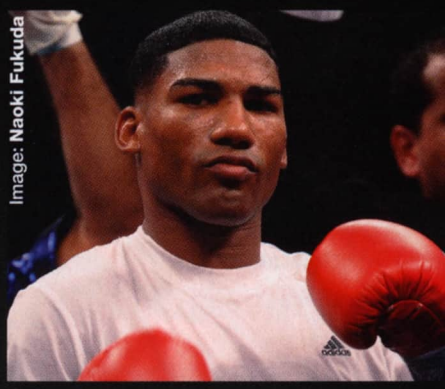


Image: Naoki Fukuda

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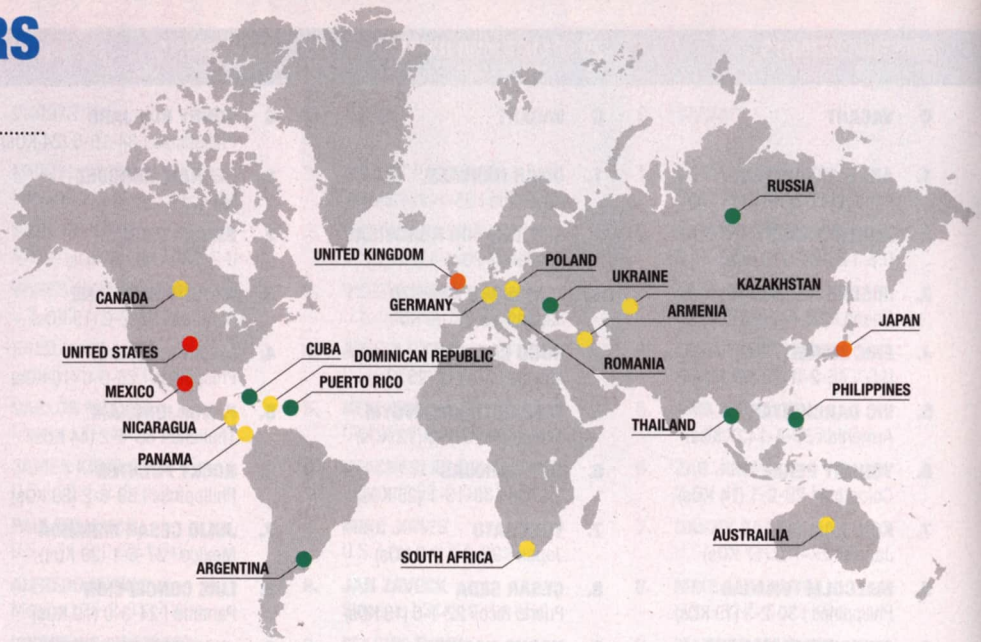
RATED FIGHTERS BY COUNTRY

UNITED STATES	33
MEXICO	27
JAPAN	16
UNITED KINGDOM	12
PHILIPPINES	10
THAILAND	6
UKRAINE	6
ARGENTINA	5
CUBA	5
PUERTO RICO	5
RUSSIA	5
GERMANY	4
PANAMA	4
POLAND	4
SOUTH AFRICA	4
ARMENIA	2
AUSTRALIA	2
CANADA	2
KAZAKHSTAN	2
NICARAGUA	2
ROMANIA	2
BULGARIA	1
CAMEROON	1
COLOMBIA	1
COSTA RICA	1
DENMARK	1
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	1
FINLAND	1
FRANCE	1
GHANA	1
HUNGARY	1
INDONESIA	1
ITALY	1
JAMAICA	1
NAMIBIA	1
NIGERIA	1
SLOVENIA	1
SPAIN	1
TURKEY	1
UZBEKISTAN	1

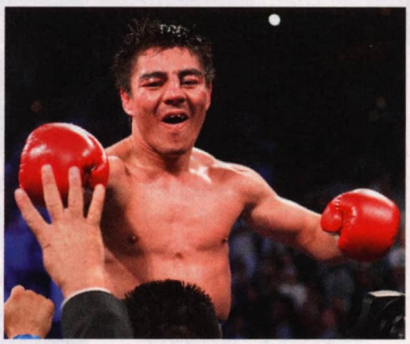


N. AMER. VS. WORLD

NORTH AMERICA – INCLUDING POWERHOUSES UNITED STATES AND MEXICO – IS BY FAR THE MOST-DOMINATING CONTINENT ON EARTH IN TERMS OF BOXING. HERE'S A LOOK AT HOW IT COMPARES TO THE REST OF THE COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD.

DIVISION	N. AMER.	WORLD
HEAVYWEIGHT	1	10
CRUSIERWEIGHT	4	7
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT	4	7
SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT	3	8
MIDDLEWEIGHT	1	10
JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT	9	1
WELTERWEIGHT	5	5
JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT	7	3
LIGHTWEIGHT	7	4
JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHT	8	2
FEATHERWEIGHT	8	2
JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHT	4	6
BANTAMWEIGHT	4	6
JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHT	4	6
FLYWEIGHT	4	7
JUNIOR FLYWEIGHT	5	5
STRAWWEIGHT	3	7
TOTAL	**81**	**96**

POWER PUNCHERS



THE RING-RATED FIGHTERS WITH THE MOST KNOCKOUTS:

50	WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
46	JORGE ARCE
45	JHONNY GONZALEZ
44	PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM
40	VITALI KLITSCHKO
39	JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ
38	MANNY PACQUIAO
36	RAFAEL MARQUEZ
36	ERIK MORALES
35	DANIEL PONCE DE LEON
35	GLEN JOHNSON
33	MIKKEL KESSLER
33	KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK
32	BERNARD HOPKINS
32	POONSAWAT KRATINGDAENGGYM
31	JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ JR.

Image: Chris Cozzone-Fightwireimages

NOTE: The country of fighters who have spent large portions of their lives in two countries was determined primarily by where they spent the bulk of their childhood.

OLD SCHOOL 8

Many hardcore boxing fans are the nostalgic type. We reminisce about the good ol' days, when men were men and everyone knew who the champions were. In that spirit, we initiated this new feature in which THE RING staffers — Michael Rosenthal, Doug Fischer and Lem Satterfield — and a different guest each month provide their current champions in the original eight weight classes.

Back in the day, anyone heavier than 175 pounds had to fight as a heavyweight, fighters over the middleweight limit of 160 had to fight as light heavyweights, those heavier than 147 fought as middleweights and so on. That's how it works in our new feature. Our guest this month is Al Bernstein, the Showtime analyst and a member of the International Boxing Hall of Fame's Class of 2012.

MICHAEL ROSENTHAL RING MAGAZINE EDITOR
HEAVYWEIGHT: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: ANDRE WARD
MIDDLEWEIGHT: SERGIO MARTINEZ
WELTERWEIGHT: MANNY PACQUIAO
LIGHTWEIGHT: BRANDON RIOS
FEATHERWEIGHT: YURIORKIS GAMBOA
BANTAMWEIGHT: ANSELMO MORENO
FLYWEIGHT: BRIAN VILORIA

DOUG FISCHER RINGTV.COM EDITOR
HEAVYWEIGHT: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: ANDRE WARD
MIDDLEWEIGHT: SERGIO MARTINEZ
WELTERWEIGHT: MANNY PACQUIAO
LIGHTWEIGHT: BRANDON RIOS
FEATHERWEIGHT: YURIORKIS GAMBOA
BANTAMWEIGHT: ANSELMO MORENO
FLYWEIGHT: BRIAN VILORIA

LEM SATTERFIELD STAFF WRITER
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LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: ANDRE WARD
MIDDLEWEIGHT: SERGIO MARTINEZ
WELTERWEIGHT: FLOYD MAYWEATHER
LIGHTWEIGHT: BRANDON RIOS
FEATHERWEIGHT: YURIORKIS GAMBOA
BANTAMWEIGHT: ANSELMO MORENO
FLYWEIGHT: BRIAN VILORIA

AL BERNSTEIN SHOWTIME ANALYST
HEAVYWEIGHT: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: ANDRE WARD
MIDDLEWEIGHT: SERGIO MARTINEZ
WELTERWEIGHT: FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.
LIGHTWEIGHT: BRANDON RIOS
FEATHERWEIGHT: NONITO DONAIRE
BANTAMWEIGHT: ANSELMO MORENO
FLYWEIGHT: BRIAN VILORIA

All four members of the Old School Eight panel believe **Andre Ward** is the best fighter among both light heavyweights and super middleweights. Image: **Mark Ralston-AFP-Getty Images**

SECOND CHOICE, FIRST RATE

THE FANS WOULD PREFER MAYWEATHER FACE PACQUIAO BUT COTTO IS A LEGITIMATE FOE

By **Gary Andrew Poole**

There they sat, center stage in a Hollywood theatre, on red and gold thrones. Miguel Cotto and Floyd Mayweather Jr. touting themselves as "ring kings" during their pre-fight hype tour. Mayweather talked about Cotto's ring brilliance, his opponent's status as one of the greats.

Because Manny Pacquiao wasn't on stage, listening to Mayweather's words brought Hamlet to mind: "How like you this play?" "The lady doth protest too much, methinks."

There was disappointment around the May 5 matchup between Cotto and Mayweather because it seemed during the winter as if Mayweather vs. Pacquiao had at least a marginal chance of happening. Most people in the know didn't give it much of a chance at all, of course, and soon enough winter turned into discontent.

In late December, Mayweather pleaded guilty to lesser charges that would avoid felony prosecution for allegedly assaulting his ex-girlfriend, Josie Harris, in September 2010, and was slapped with 90 days in jail. He was supposed to start the sentence in early January, but the judge agreed to postpone it until June 1. The undefeated boxer was cleared to fight on May 5.

Boxing fans speculated that the news might mean Mayweather would finally fight Pacquiao. Not long after his sentence was delayed, Mayweather took to Twit-

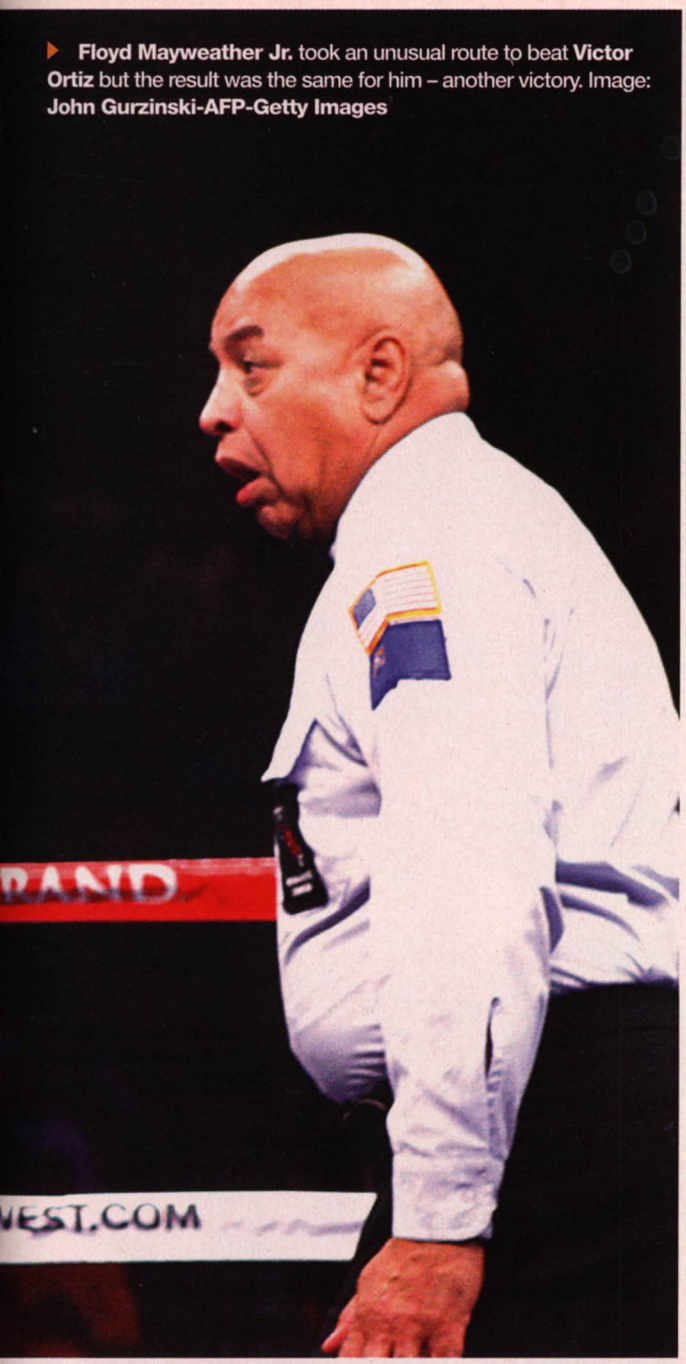
Many observers believe **Miguel Cotto** is a legitimate opponent for **Floyd Mayweather Jr.** even if he's a considerable underdog.

Image: **Chris Trotman-Getty Images**

ter and challenged Pacquiao: "Manny Pacquiao I'm calling you out let's fight May 5th and give the world what they want to see." "My Jail Sentence was pushed back because the date was locked in. Step up Punk."

Bob Arum, Pacquiao's promoter, traveled to the Philippines with a list of five potential opponents, including Mayweather, to present to his prized client. Nevertheless, Arum said that fighting on May 5 would not work for Pacquiao because Arum wanted to build a temporary 45,000-capacity outdoor arena across from the Wynn Hotel on the Las Vegas Strip to stage a mega-showdown. The ticket buyers to the new venue would create an additional $30 million for the fighters, he said.

By refusing to fight on May 5 and proposing a new venue, however, Arum put Mayweather – his jail stay looming – into an awkward position, and the negotiations went downhill with both sides accusing each other of various misunderstandings. Pacquiao and Mayweather eventually talked on the phone but they couldn't decide on how to split the proceeds of the potential "fight of the century," and the negotiations, if they were ever serious in the first place, stopped. Just to make sure the childish banter continued beyond the failed negotiations, Mayweather announced: "I'm fighting Miguel Cotto on May 5th because Miss Pac Man is ducking me."



Floyd Mayweather Jr. took an unusual route to beat **Victor Ortiz** but the result was the same for him – another victory. Image: **John Gurzinski-AFP-Getty Images**

The fan outrage and interest in Mayweather-Pacquiao has seemed to grow less intense with each failed negotiation, as fans feel suckered and betrayed yet again.

And so, this being the boxing business, Pacquiao went a logical route and decided upon a June 9 fight against Tim Bradley, an excellent, undefeated boxer who thus far has been memorable for not being so memorable. Bradley is a young, determined, world-class fighter who has been studying Pacquiao for years, and he knows that dethroning Pacquiao will give him a chance to make a bigger name for himself. Mayweather decided to fight Cotto, a dangerous veteran who has looked very good of late against relatively weak competition.

While disgusted fight fans were upset that Mayweather and Pacquiao are willing to ignore their desires and not fight each other, it must also be said that both Pacquiao and Mayweather are facing legitimate contenders. But do they pose a serious danger to the real ring kings?

Most people are discounting Cotto's chances more than Bradley's hopes, but the Puerto Rican star has much more than a puncher's chance. It seems as if fandom's discounting of Cotto is a result of emotional distress over the Pacquiao-Mayweather non-fight rather than a true examination of Cotto's skills and intangibles. He has consistently faced world class opponents, he has

"I'M FIGHTING MIGUEL COTTO ON MAY 5TH BECAUSE MISS PAC MAN IS DUCKING ME."

– FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.

better than good hand speed, and – most importantly – he has the ability to change his strategy mid-fight, a necessary skill against master tactician Mayweather.

OK, OK, Cotto's last three fights were against a guy with a bum knee (Yuri Foreman), an older fighter on the slide (Ricardo Mayorga), and a Cyclops (Antonio Margarito). But he beat them handily. Before Foreman, Cotto fought Pacquiao but couldn't keep up with the Filipino's ghost-like speed and aggression, and the general thinking is that Cotto won't match up with Mayweather's ghost-like defensive speed. There are two counter arguments to that logic: Cotto had to significantly come down in weight (144) for the Pacquiao fight (he will be fighting Mayweather for a junior middleweight title), and he had become sloppy with his footwork and balance, something he has corrected. Look back at the Pacquiao fight: Cotto would throw a combination but he would lose his balance. Run the tape of his most recent fights and you'll see a guy who is throwing seven or eight punches with his feet working in concert, and his weight is balanced. A major key in this fight, and something that makes it intriguing, is whether or not Cotto can maintain his balance against a slippery fighter like Mayweather.

Cotto is also a physical pressure fighter who won't be intimidated by Mayweather, who uses his left elbow as a sickle to disarm and frustrate his opponents. He is so quick and deceptive with the foul that no referee—for some reason—seems to catch it. Of all Mayweather's recent opponents, pitbull Cotto is strong enough to push that elbow down, if he isn't caught in the jaw with it. Mayweather, now 35, hasn't seemed to age (he takes

so few punches that he is probably more like a 28-year-old fighter), but in his last several fights he has been less inclined to take a purely defensive strategy. Going backward and moving laterally becomes more difficult with age, and Mayweather looks slightly less effective in his ability to move everywhere except forward.

Cotto also won't lose the fight before he steps through the ropes. Mayweather beats many of his opponents before they enter the ring, of course. He uses what I call an anti-bootcamp strategy: He builds up his opponents and then slowly tears them down as the fight approaches. Cotto has been through the grind of HBO's *24/7*, he has won world titles, and he isn't likely to let Mayweather's psychological warfare impact him.

As for Mayweather's psychological state of mind: Jail time is in the near future and that would weigh on anyone, most sports fans have shown frustration about the non-fight with Pacquiao (it isn't easy to constantly play the villain and hear the catcalls), and Cotto will be his toughest opponent in several years. This is no young, inexperienced fighter like Victor Ortiz.

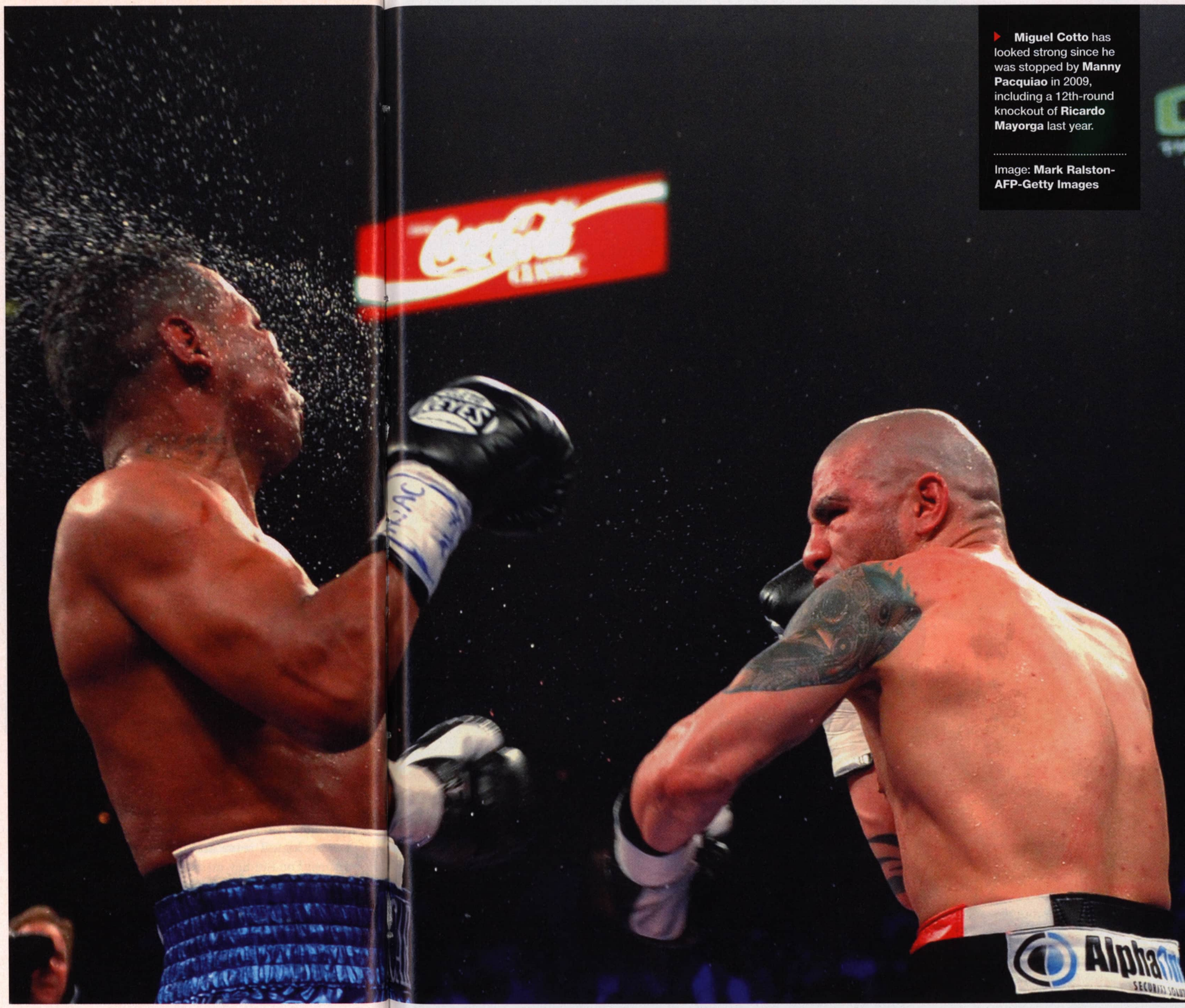
So, yes, Cotto is a dangerous person to face. He is a master ring tactician and harder puncher than people give him credit for, but—as the old axiom goes—you can't teach speed, and Mayweather has a huge advantage in the quickness department. Yes, Cotto's footwork has improved since Emanuel Steward worked with him on it, but if Mayweather is a younger fighter than his age, Cotto is probably older because of the brutal fights he has experienced. Mayweather will surely cross him up, and Cotto's gloves will probably be hitting more air than flesh as Mayweather grinds him down, round after round.

No, it's not Mayweather vs. Pacquiao, and that's a shame—more boxing comedy than real tragedy. Whether someone wants to spend hard-earned dollars in this economy on a pay-per-view fight, which in many ways keeps the Mayweather-Pacquiao fight in permanent purgatory, that is the fans' call. But from a boxing standpoint, it is a legitimate fight, and yet the clear favorite on May 5 is Sir Mayweather.

Hamlet, errrr, Mayweather will survive and wear the crown on May 5. If Pacquiao can do the same on June 9, and the two men can finally come to terms, this era's legitimate ring kings could-maybe-possibly meet in the ring. Boxing conspiracy theorists might believe this is a well-hatched master plan by Pacquiao and Mayweather to keeping increasing interest in them while they pad their bank accounts. (But if they don't win, both of their reputations will be seriously diminished.)

Perhaps, as Shakespeare once said, "Though this be madness, yet there is method in it."

But probably not. ■



Miguel Cotto has looked strong since he was stopped by **Manny Pacquiao** in 2009, including a 12th-round knockout of **Ricardo Mayorga** last year.

Image: **Mark Ralston-AFP-Getty Images**

OUT OF THE NORM

ON THE MONEY

MAYWEATHER HAS TURNED HIS BAD-BOY IMAGE INTO A FORTUNE

By: **Norm Frauenheim**

The many descriptions of Floyd Mayweather Jr. are like roles in an evolving drama. Mayweather has played them all, or at least tried to. Or maybe he just grew up and out of old costumes. From Pretty Boy to Money, maybe he tried on a polarizing persona, liked the fit and liked what he heard even more. Maybe, he enjoys those boos. Maybe, he really is a villain.

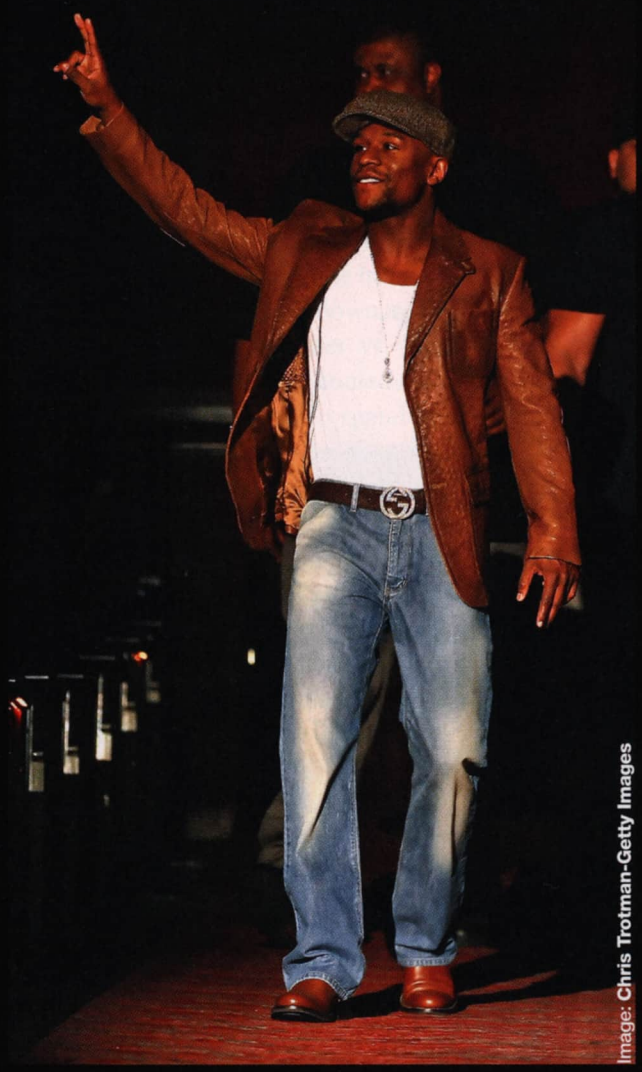


Image: Chris Trotman-Getty Images

Only the Money isn't a maybe.

How he got there, how he became a fighter who could earn $40 million in a single night against Miguel Cotto just weeks before he is scheduled to begin a 90-day jail term for domestic abuse is a maddening mix of contradiction, speculation and debate. Pay-per-view or pay-to-boo, Mayweather is whoever his customers want him to be.

He cheered the boos that rained down on him like another payday on Feb. 28 during a news conference at New York's Apollo Theater for his date with Cotto on May 5 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas. Polite cheering can hide ambivalence. But angry booing is a sure sign of real interest.

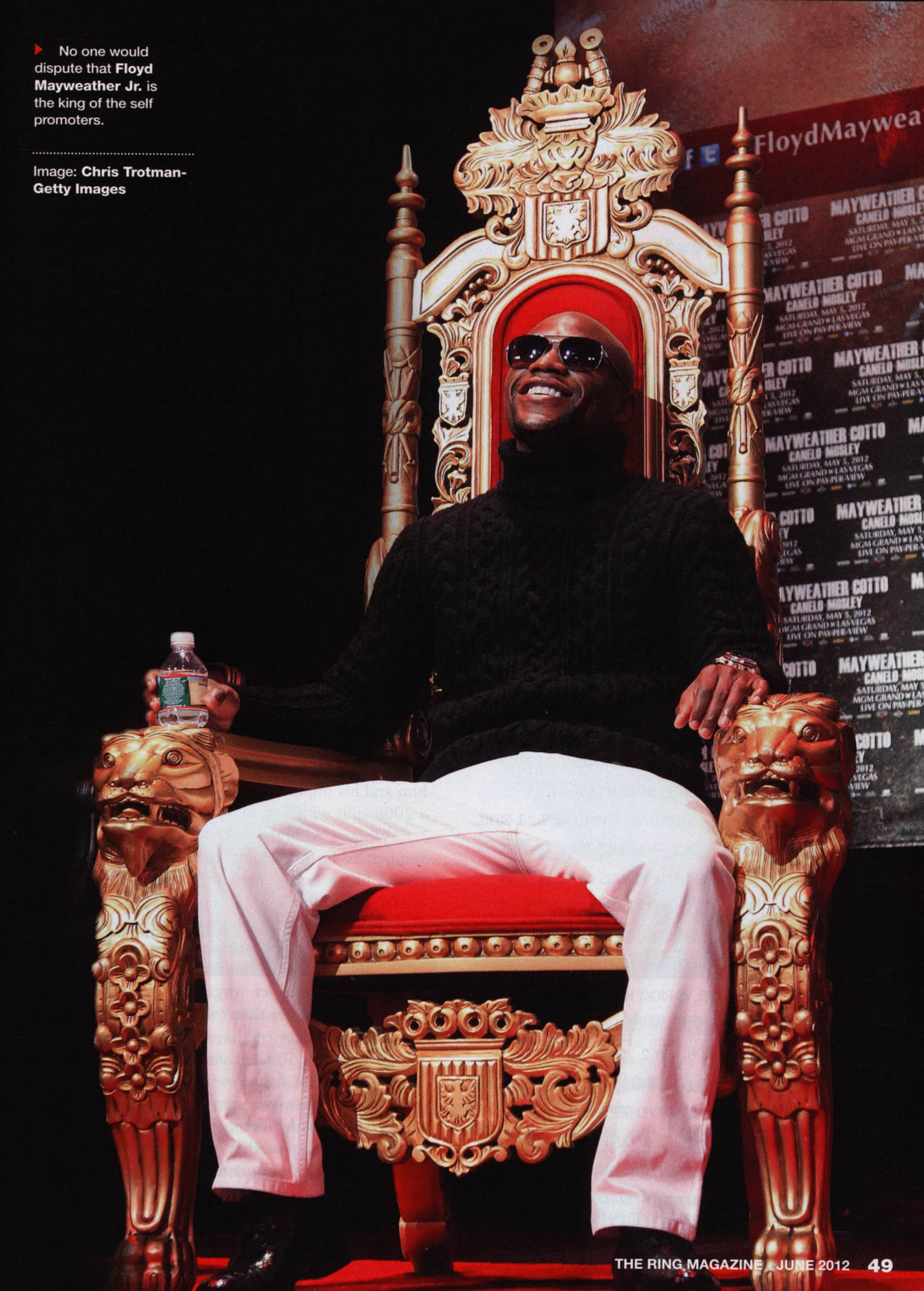
"I know people want to drag me down every chance they get," Mayweather said. "The media twists things up. I'm this, I'm that."

This and that became a lot more after a pay-per-view record of 2.45 million watched Mayweather beat Oscar De La Hoya on May 5, 2007.

Pre-De La Hoya, the unbeaten Mayweather had fought in three pay-per-view bouts. In 2005, he drew a PPV audience of 369,000 for a victory over Arturo Gatti. In 2006, 378,000 bought the telecast for his victory over Zab Judah and 324,000 watched him beat Carlos Baldomir later that year. The boxing crowd bought Mayweather for his brilliant, calculated ring skill. But the so-called crossover fans were missing. De La Hoya had cornered that rich part of the market with good looks and a soft-spoken manner.

Mayweather and his advisors, including Leonard Ellerbe, have argued repeatedly that he, not De La Hoya, drove the pay-per-view business to unprecedented numbers on that night in May nearly five years ago. Then, however, De La Hoya was considered the pay-per-view star. He had the numbers; Mayweather didn't.

Nevertheless, the De La Hoya bout marked a sea-change in the way Mayweather presented himself. It began with a new nickname that re-defined an identity with some sharpened edges. Mayweather had been known as Pretty Boy Floyd. But that was a little bit too much like Golden Boy, De La Hoya's moniker and now the name of his promotional company.



No one would dispute that **Floyd Mayweather Jr.** is the king of the self promoters.

Image: **Chris Trotman-Getty Images**

PAY-PER-VIEW KINGS

Floyd Mayweather Jr. has been one of the most-popular boxers in recent years if you judge by pay-per-view numbers. Mike Tyson has the taken part in the most events that have exceeded 1 million buys, followed by Manny Pacquiao. Mayweather is tied for third with two others. Here is that list and the events with the most buys.

MORE THAN 1 MILLION

MIKE TYSON **6** // MANNY PACQUIAO **5** // EVANDER HOLYFIELD **4** // OSCAR DE LA HOYA **4** // FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR. **4**

MOST BUYS

2.45 MILLION DE LA HOYA-MAYWEATHER MAY 5, 2007

1.99 MILLION TYSON-HOLYFIELD II JUNE 28, 1997

1.97 MILLION TYSON-LENNOX LEWIS JUNE 8, 2002

1.59 MILLION TYSON-HOLYFIELD I NOV. 9, 1996

1.55 MILLION TYSON-PETER MCNEELEY AUG. 19, 1995

1.45 MILLION PACQUIAO-J.M. MARQUEZ NOV. 13, 2011

1.4 MILLION HOLYFIELD-GEORGE FOREMAN APRIL 19, 1991

1.4 MILLION DE LA HOYA-FELIX TRINIDAD SEPT. 18, 1999

1.4 MILLION MAYWEATHER-SHANE MOSLEY MAY 1, 2010

1.37 MILLION TYSON-FRANK BRUNO II MARCH 16, 1996

1.3 MILLION PACQUIAO-MOSLEY MAY 7, 2011

1.25 MILLION TYSON-DONOVAN RUDDOCK II JUNE 28, 1991

1.25 MILLION DE LA HOYA-PACQUIAO DEC. 6, 2008

1.25 MILLION PACQUIAO-MIGUEL COTTO NOV. 14, 2009

1.25 MILLION MAYWEATHER-VICTOR ORTIZ SEPT. 17, 2011

1.2 MILLION HOLYFIELD- LEWIS I MARCH 13, 1999

1.15 MILLION PACQUIAO-ANTONIO MARGARITO NOV. 13, 2010

1.06 MILLION MAYWEATHER JR.-MARQUEZ SEPT. 19, 2009

1 MILLION DE LA HOYA-BERNARD HOPKINS SEPT. 18, 2004

950,000 DE LA HOYA-MOSLEY II SEPT, 13, 2003

935,000 DE LA HOYA-FERNANDO VARGAS SEPT. 14, 2002

925,000 DE LA HOYA-RICARDO MAYORGA MAY 6, 2006

920,000 MAYWEATHER JR. VS RICKY HATTON DEC. 8, 2007

850,000 HOLYFIELD-LEWIS II NOV. 13, 1999

850,000 PACQUIAO-HATTON MAY 2, 2009

740,000 JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ-PERNELL WHITAKER SEPT. 10, 1993

740,000 CHAVEZ-HECTOR CAMACHO SEPT. 12, 1992

720,000 DE LA HOYA-PERNELL WHITAKER APRIL 12, 1997

700,000 PACQUIAO-JOSHUA CLOTTEY MARCH 13, 2010

NOTE: THESE FIGURES WERE GLEANED FROM VARIOUS PUBLISHED REPORTS. THEY VARY SLIGHTLY DEPENDING ON THE SOURCE.

Mayweather went with Money and then went on to make a lot of it with an average pay-per-view audience of 1.21 million over his last four fights – 920,000 for Ricky Hatton in 2007, 1.06 million for Juan Manuel Marquez in 2009, 1.4 million for Shane Mosley in 2010 and 1.25 million for Victor Ortiz last November.

The genesis of the nickname is not certain. But Richard Schaefer, CEO of Golden Boy Promotions, remembers a moment during the cross-country promotional tour for Mayweather -De La Hoya with Mark Taffet, HBO's senior vice president of sports operations and pay-per-view.

"I think it was Mark Taffet, who came up with Money," said Schaefer, who represents Mayweather. "He said: 'Look at all the money you're making. You should change your name to Money Mayweather. It was in a private jet and everything. It sort of started something."

The new nickname and identity began to take hold in 2007 with HBO's *24/7*, the series that was launched before Mayweather's split decision over De La Hoya. Without the angry outbursts at his estranged father, Floyd Sr., or the road work at midnight through Las Vegas neon, it would have been just another forgotten exercise in reality television. Perhaps it's reality, but it's also TV, which means cameras and an audience. It demands somebody who knows how to play a role. Mayweather did, making *24/7* his own and turning it into a marketing vehicle with urban America, the hip-hop generation, as its target.

The makeover is believed to be the brainchild of Al Haymon, the Harvard-educated advisor who worked in the music industry as a promoter before drifting into boxing in 2000. Haymon doesn't do interviews. He doesn't have to. He has everybody else talking about him and his impact on Mayweather's career, including a 2006 split with Top Rank for a reported $750,000.

"Where's Al Haymon?" Mayweather said last November as he mockingly looked out at a post-fight crowd like a sailor searching for land during a news conference following his controversial victory over Victor Ortiz. "Al Haymon would never come up here. Al Haymon is the Ghost."

And apparently as indispensable is he invisible.

Mayweather never forgets to thank Haymon for engineering a career that rolled show biz into boxing. It's no coincidence, perhaps, that Mayweather hangs out with rapper 50 Cent. Since the De La Hoya bout, Mayweather is a fighter with a hip-hop style that allows him to cross over into an audience that has been ignored since Mike Tyson. Haymon has been credited with getting Mayweather on *Dancing With The Stars* and into a *WrestleMania* match in 2008 against somebody appropriately named Big Show. Big money, too. Mayweather collected $20 million. Go ahead and boo.

Floyd Mayweather Jr.'s nickname, Money, rubs some people the wrong way but it certainly is accurate.
Image: **Chris Trotman-Getty Images**

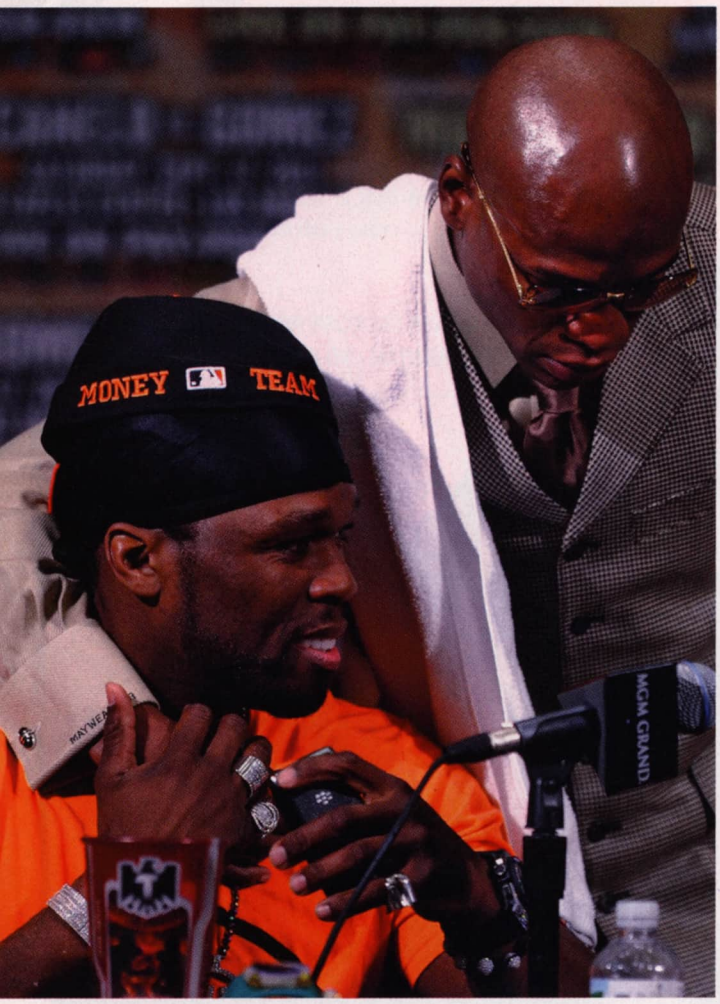
Above all, Mayweather knows boxing and talks about his eventual place in a history that includes a plot, good-versus-evil. It's theater as old as scar tissue. Somebody has to be booed. Somebody has to be the bad guy. If Mayweather doesn't exactly embrace the role, he doesn't reject it, although Schaefer says it is unfair.

"The Floyd Mayweather I know is a terrific young man and comes across as very polite," Schaefer said. "I just see a different person than is portrayed in the media. He is very quiet about what he does."

The good guy in Mayweather emerges almost as a surprise. Example: He paid for former junior lightweight foe Genaro Hernandez's funeral in June.

"He just does it," Schaefer said. "He doesn't send out press releases, saying this is what I've done. People these days prefer to write about the more outrageous things – the Big Boy Mansion, cars, bling and all of that. I don't think he gets a fair rep when it comes to media coverage."

But he is facing a jail sentence in Las Vegas, rescheduled to begin on June 1, for domestic violence in a



Floyd Mayweather Jr.'s friendship with rapper **50 Cent** (left) undoubtedly has enhanced his popularity. Image: **Chris Trotman-Getty Images**

2010 confrontation with his ex-girlfriend, Josie Harris, who also is the mother to three of his children. This is the same Mayweather, who in 2001 was about to fight Diego Corrales. Corrales was facing jail on charges he punched his pregnant wife. He eventually did 14 months behind bars. Before the bout, Mayweather said: "I want Diego because I'm doing it for all the battered women across America. Just like he beat that woman, I'm going to beat him."

Mayweather's words get him into trouble. The latest involved a tweet about Jeremy Lin, the Chinese-American who dominated the New York media as a feel-good story – Linsanity – when he led the Knicks on an improbable run as the starting playmaker. Mayweather said Lin was getting attention only because he is Asian. Great African-American players perform as well, yet without the attention, he said.

It caused controversy, yet after a few days there was talk in the media that maybe Mayweather had a point. But Mayweather's problem was context. In 2010, Mayweather went on a rant directed at Filipino welterweight Manny Pacquiao. It was condemned as racist and homophobic. Mayweather tearfully apologized. For many, however, it was hard to separate his argument about Lin from what he said about Pacquiao.

Good guy or bad guy? Like the words about Lin and Pacquiao, the truth probably rests somewhere in between. But that doesn't mean Mayweather won't play a role that once belonged to Mike Tyson and Sonny Liston and even George Foreman, the designated villain in the legendary Rumble in The Jungle against Muhammad Ali. For Foreman, the role was never true to character, says his former publicist and lifetime friend Bill Caplan. We know that today. Now 63, Foreman is the happy and generous personality best captured in that photo of him smiling like a friendly bear after winning an Olympic gold medal at the 1968 Mexico City Games.

For Liston, it was probably real. For Tyson, it was confusing and now even regrettable. Tyson looks at Mayweather in HBO's *24/7* and sees some of his former self.

"I used to do weird, crazy stuff like that, but that gets people's attention," Tyson said in March during a radio interview with WXYT in Detroit. "The drama sells. That's the reality of the situation."

Always has been, says Don Chargin, who has seen a lot of bad guys in his days as a Hall of Fame promoter. Even Sugar Ray Robinson could be tough on those around him, Chargin said.

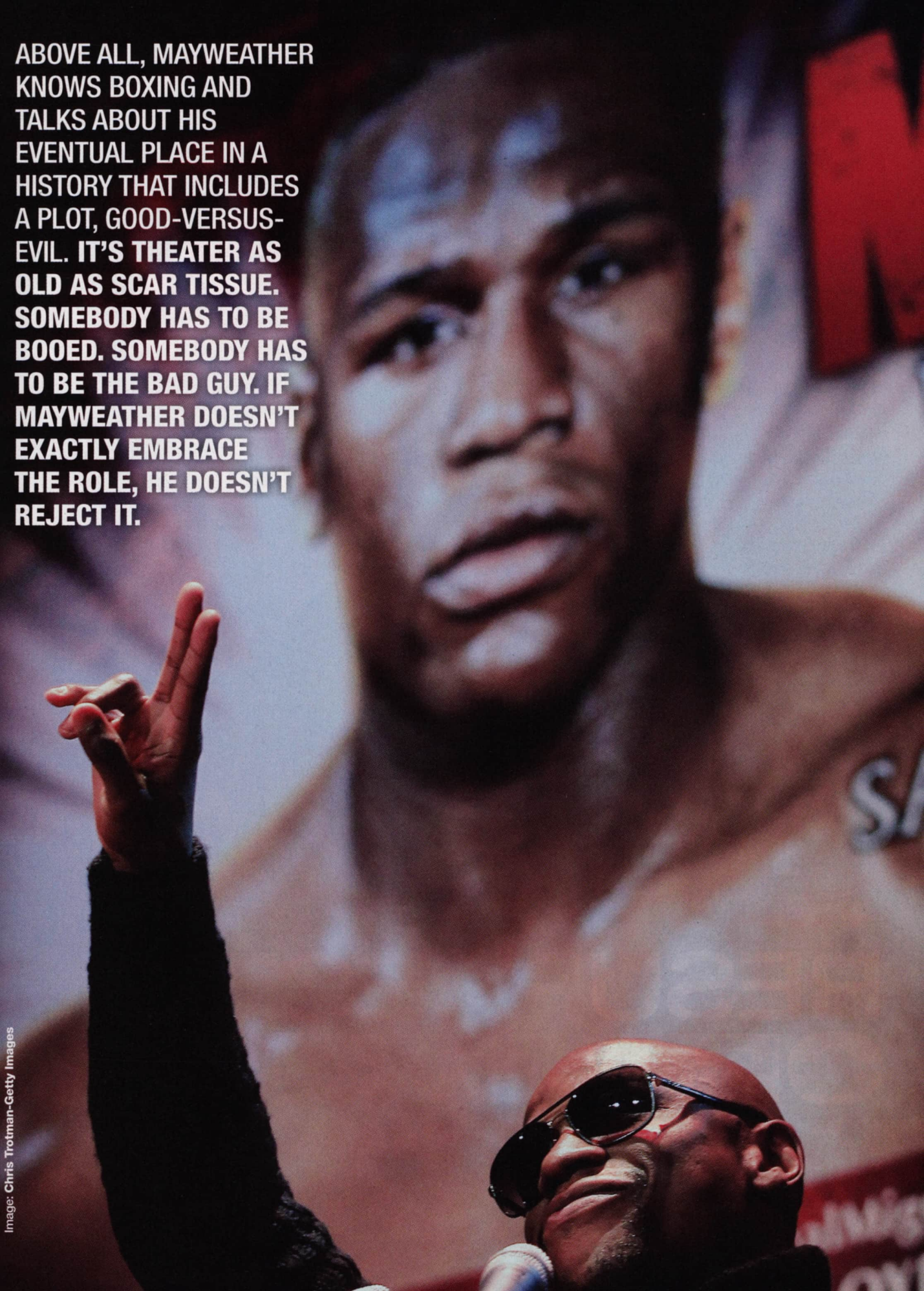
"In those days, he was called difficult," Chargin said.

Then, there were some who had to be difficult just to survive. Chargin remembers a lightweight, Jimmy Robertson, who in 1973 lost a title fight to Roberto Duran in Panama City. In the early 1970s, Robertson won consistently at the old Olympic Auditorium in Los Angeles, yet had a style that didn't excite fans. He couldn't draw.

"He comes to me and says 'I can't sell a ticket, but I gotta make a living. What do I need to do?'" Chargin said. "I told him, 'Jimmy, you can do something, but it'll be difficult. It'll be controversial. People will come to see you fight, but not because they like you.'

"I told that him that he had to go out and tell the media that he'd knock out every Mexican he fought. They hated him for it. But they came to see him fight. He became a draw."

Villains, real or imagined, always do. Mayweather, a real villain or an actor who knows how to play the role, is just the latest one. Maybe, the richest one, too. ■



ABOVE ALL, MAYWEATHER KNOWS BOXING AND TALKS ABOUT HIS EVENTUAL PLACE IN A HISTORY THAT INCLUDES A PLOT, GOOD-VERSUS-EVIL. **IT'S THEATER AS OLD AS SCAR TISSUE. SOMEBODY HAS TO BE BOOED. SOMEBODY HAS TO BE THE BAD GUY. IF MAYWEATHER DOESN'T EXACTLY EMBRACE THE ROLE, HE DOESN'T REJECT IT.**

Image: Chris Trotman-Getty Images

RESURRECTION OR MIRAGE?

Miguel Cotto's victory in his rematch with **Antonio Margarito** was sweet revenge even if it didn't prove much.

Image: **Al Bello-Getty Images**

THE CURRENT VERSION OF MIGUEL COTTO IS EITHER REBORN OR, MORE LIKELY, SIMPLY **GETTING THE MOST OUT OF WHAT HE HAS LEFT AGAINST THE RIGHT OPPONENTS**

By **Ron Borges**

In boxing, resurrections can be short lived. Whether that will be the case on May 5, when seemingly reborn WBA junior middleweight titleholder Miguel Cotto risks both his belt and his momentum against arguably the world's best fighter, Floyd Mayweather, Jr., remains to be seen. The larger issue is whether there has been a resurrection at all.

After Cotto was bludgeoned by Antonio Margarito 3½ years ago and then methodically destroyed by Manny Pacquiao a year later, he appeared to be severely damaged goods at best and completely shot at worst. Few fighters survive one such beating without losing a piece of themselves they can never get back. The likelihood that this could happen twice without severe and irreversible consequences seemed slim to none and slim was out of town.

Then came a stoppage of the mercurial but once-feared Ricardo Mayorga, followed by a vengefully one-sided demolition of Margarito in a rematch last December, and it seemed to some that the great Puerto Rican champion was back.

Cotto not only had moved up in weight to 154 pounds and won another world title, but he again looked like the fighter he'd long been – technically proficient, sturdy under pressure and someone who, though not a devastating puncher, could inflict a lot of

Miguel Cotto, celebrating his knockout of **Antonio Margarito**, has stopped his three opponents since he was KO'd himself by **Manny Pacquiao**.

Image: **Al Bello-Getty Images**

cumulative damage. For much of his career, Cotto had been like a human wrecking ball – no single blow demolished what was in front of him, but over time defenses collapsed, opponents imploded and he remained standing.

But as the biggest payday of his career approaches on Cinco de Mayo (which one of these guys is Mexican again?) who really is this Miguel Cotto?

Has he somehow rebuilt both his fortress and his arsenal, returning to again be the fighter who was once considered in any conversation about Puerto Rico's finest fistic exports? Or will he prove to be someone better suited to fight at the Mirage than the MGM Grand Garden Arena?

One thing is clear – no fighter could absorb the kind of punishment Cotto sustained for 11 rounds against Margarito before surrendering on one knee, as well as all but the final 55 seconds of 12 rounds against Pacquiao, and remain the same.

"He's as close to being shot but still able to perform as you can be," claimed long-time promoter Mike Acri, who over the years did well bringing back the likes of Roberto Duran, Hector Camacho and Paul Spadafora after others had judged them to be yesterday's news.

"I know he's a shot fighter but sometimes a guy like that, who used to be great, has a last hurrah in him. Mayweather doesn't throw a lot of punches. Maybe 40 a round. He's tremendously accurate and he's a lot quicker than Cotto, but if Cotto presses the pace, he may not hurt Cotto because he's so safety-conscious and defensive he'll only throw enough to win.

"I don't think Cotto is near what he was but I'm not sure it's a wipeout. Cotto is strong and because it's his last hurrah he'll do all he can to make it a good show. I'm just not sure how much he still can do."

But what of the wins over Mayorga and Margarito and the stoppage of then-154-pound champion Yuri Foreman that followed those one-sided defeats? Did they not signify some sort of remarkable resurgence in Cotto?

Not only did he win those fights, he won in the way he once had – with resilience and controlled aggression that closed the show in all three cases and was clear in the rematch with Margarito. That fight, of course, was more than a boxing match to Cotto. It was revenge for what he came to believe was a foulfilled defeat.

Although he has no evidence beyond his own suspicions and the disgraced Margarito's exposure as a cheater wearing loaded hand wraps against Mosley in his next fight, Cotto was likely able to dismiss the savagery of the beating he took when they first met in 2008 as the result not of slippage on his part but shenanigans on Margarito's.

"It's a credit to his tenacity that he could come all the way back and win a championship and face what he had to face with Margarito again," said former light heavyweight titleholder and long-time Las Vegas-based trainer Eddie Mustafa Muhammad with admiration. "Margarito just beat him down and then Pacquiao beat him down and he was able to put all that stuff behind him and win. You've got to take your hat off to him.

"The guy got the crap kicked out of him and he faced down the guy who did it to win and put a serious whipping on the guy, too. When you talk about the great Puerto Rican champions, he's in the top three or four."

Perhaps so, but is he still? And who, really, did he beat that second night against Margarito or when he stopped the unreliable Mayorga? Did he beat who the posters said he did or were they mirages too?

"I have great respect for Cotto," said veteran matchmaker Bruce Trampler, who made many of Cotto's fights when he was promoted by Bob Arum. "But Margarito was an Everlast heavy bag that night. He was right there in front of him all night. A lot of people had seen a decline in Margarito the last few years. Some people didn't even think New York should have licensed him because of his eye problems.

"Cotto got a lot of revenge that night. There was a lot of drama there. But now it's Floyd Mayweather. He's probably the toughest guy Floyd ever fought but he's not the same Miguel Cotto. Even when he won the title against a Yuri Foreman fighting on one leg, Cotto didn't exactly dominate.

"Once Cotto was real good. He got wobbled sometimes but only in fights where he was struggling to make weight, trying to make 140. He's a rugged guy. He's good for his generation. He was a real fighter. If this was baseball, when he was at his best you'd say he was a five-tool player. But he's not that guy anymore. He's younger than Floyd but there's a lot of mileage on Miguel Cotto."

Many of those miles were put on him by Margarito and Pacquiao, so one could easily argue that the only two losses of his 39-fight career came against a suspect opponent on the one hand and one of his generation's best fighters on the other. No shame in that, to be sure. But what was the toll those savage defeats took on him as he approaches a fight against someone who is clearly superior to Margarito and perhaps to both of them? Does a newly resurrected Cotto (37-2, 30 KO) have enough left to push Floyd Mayweather, Jr. (40-0, 26 KO) to the edge and perhaps beyond it?

It would be wise not to count on it ... or to bet your retirement funds on it.

"I like Miguel Cotto," says ESPN2's Friday Night Fights analyst and veteran trainer Teddy Atlas. "I've always liked him, going back to when I first saw him in the Olympics. I like the champion he is. The man he is. But he's a mirage now.

"This is no resurrection. It's more about who he's fought and who he hasn't fought. Even guys who are sick have good days when they feel pretty good. You go visit them on those days and you leave thinking 'He's doing good. He's getting better.' But he's not getting better.

"You put Cotto in with the right guys and he looks good. Mayorga was a sunny day for him. I give him a lot of credit for coming back and facing the ghost of Margarito, but Margarito was well past it himself. He didn't throw with the same ferocity. I give Cotto credit for that night. He erased a nightmare but putting the (potentially loaded) gloves aside, Margarito wasn't even a bad dream anymore.

"When I look at Cotto I see a guy who's not too hard to hit. Not too fast. Not too elusive. People are hanging their hat on the fact they think he'll be stronger (at 154) but I don't think he was killing himself to make welterweight. And he's facing a real guy this time. A guy who is too fast for him. Pacquiao was too fast for him nearly three years ago and Mayweather is faster. Mayweather's a guy who's better than Pacquiao. He doesn't throw as many punches as Pacquiao but he's better.

"As much as I respect Cotto, this won't be a sunny day for him. You'll see him struggle. You'll see a guy who is three steps too slow. He took a tremendous beating with Pacquiao and an awful beating in the first fight with Margarito. He's not 100 percent because you never come back from those kinds of fights 100 percent. You're diminished. You're human. Look, he's got character. He's got the ability to face adversity and come out on the right side, but I still think he's shot."

This is how **Miguel Cotto** looked after taking a beating from **Antonio Margarito** in 2008. He has accomplished a great deal since then. Image: **Ethan Miller-Getty Images**

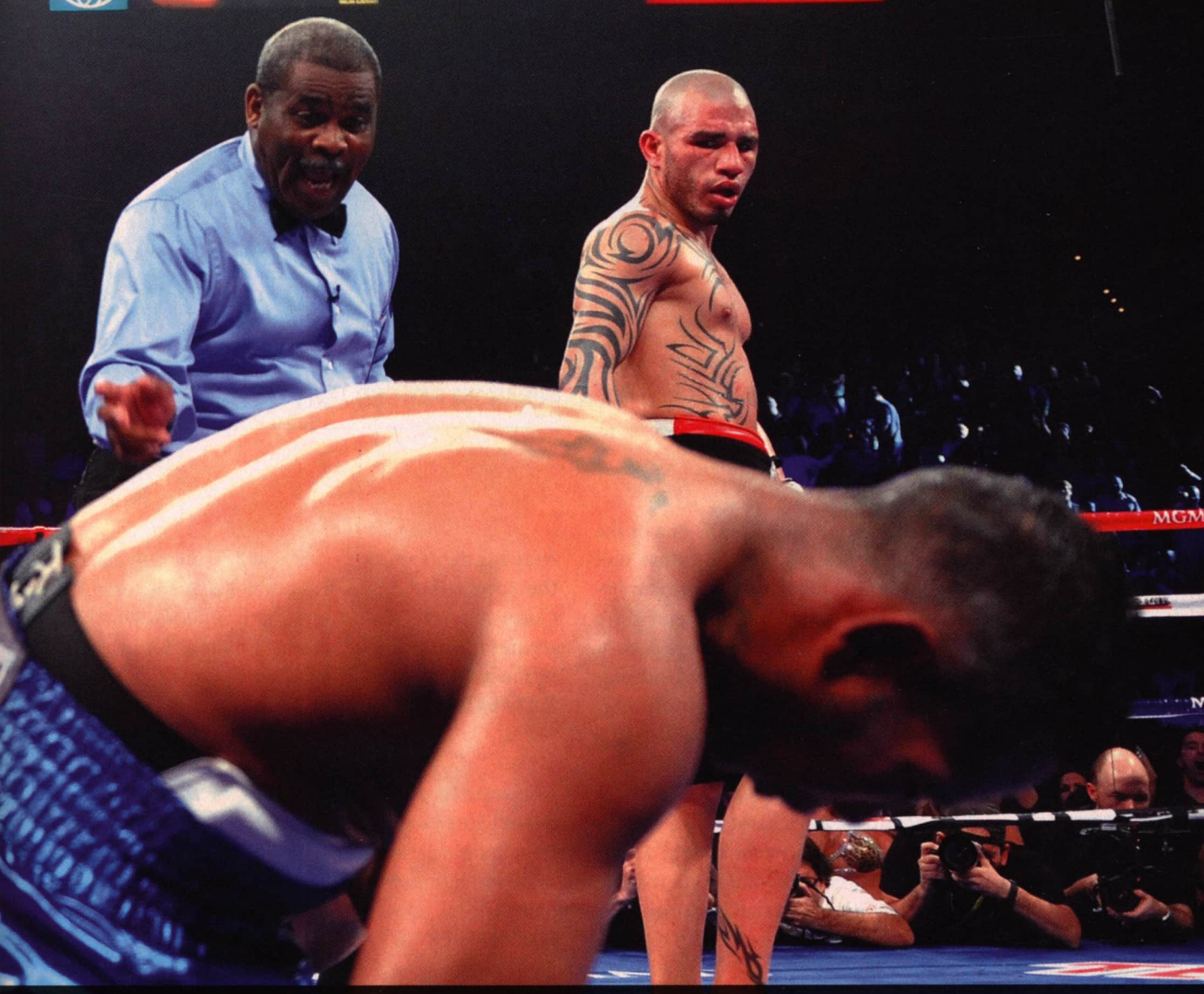
Yet believers remain. Not necessarily believers in resurrections but at least in what is left of Miguel Cotto. The most important of them is the fighter himself.

"My (first) fight with Margarito he took some things from me, my confidence in myself, a lot of things," Cotto said at a February news conference at the Apollo theatre in Harlem called to hype the Mayweather fight. "When I beat him in December, they came back to me. I feel better now."

Surely he does but is that because he is a new man or just a sickly one who, as Atlas described, has had a few sunny days? Five-time Trainer of the Year Freddie Roach, for one, sees something more in Cotto than most.

"Floyd sometimes averages 15 punches per round [actually he averages over 50, to be fair]," Roach has pointed out. "How can you beat someone like Cotto, who is a strong puncher and throws so many punches, doing that? When Cotto catches you on the ropes, that's where he does his best work and Mayweather likes to lean against the ropes to counter. In that scenario, Cotto could succeed.

"I'm not saying he's going to win but it's an interesting fight. It's a good



Miguel Cotto stopped **Ricardo Mayorga** in the 12th round in March of last year. Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

technical boxer fighting a counter-puncher. Mayweather is strong physically, but I think Cotto is a bit stronger. Mayweather is definitely much faster, as Manny was, so Miguel has to be very careful about the kind of fight plan he has against a counter-puncher like Mayweather."

Of course, Roach was also willing to put Pacquiao back in with him in a rematch, and in fact an offer to him was made before he accepted a bigger payday from Mayweather. Considering that, perhaps that opinion has to be tempered by the fact he saw no real risk for Pacquiao in facing Cotto again.

So what then, in the end, do we make of Miguel Cotto? Is he a 31-year-old Lazarus, risen from the fistic dead? Or is he what so many of his predecessors over the decades became after hard nights like the ones he endured against Antonio Margarito and Manny Pacquiao? Time will tell but time, it seems, always wins in boxing.

"My attitude is there really are no resurrections," promoter Lou DiBella said. "Floyd is a smart guy. He agreed to fight Cotto at 154 when he could have forced him to a catch weight. Why? Because he knows what's in front of him.

"Letting Cotto fight at 154 is not going to make him faster. Miguel Cotto deserves the respect of everyone in boxing to have the mental strength to come back from those kinds of beatings and do what he's done. It speaks volumes for him. He's a blood-and-guts warrior.

"Who knows? Maybe he's had a far less adverse reaction to terrible beatings than other guys. At 80 per cent of what he was he's still better than most everybody in boxing but is he 100 percent of what he was? I wouldn't bet on that."

Nor should anyone else. ■

HEAD TO HEAD

A COMPARISON OF FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR. AND MIGUEL COTTO IN 20 KEY CATEGORIES. MAYWEATHER AND COTTO FIGHT MAY 5 AT THE MGM GRAND IN LAS VEGAS ON PAY-PER-VIEW TELEVISION.

By **Doug Fischer**

Floyd Mayweather deserves his status as one of the best boxers of his generation but the future hall of famer has also earned his share of criticism because of his overly cautious selection of opponents since leaving the lightweight division almost 10 years ago.

Mayweather fought former welterweight beltholders DeMarcus Corley and Zab Judah immediately after the southpaws suffered defeats. He took on reigning 140-pound champ Ricky Hatton at welterweight, *after* the British star had proven to be decidedly less-than-formidable at 147 pounds. Mayweather also fought Juan Manuel Marquez, who had never fought above 135 pounds, at welterweight (and didn't bother to honor a contract that required he weigh no more than 144 pounds). The careful moves helped make him the undefeated superstar he is today but also garnered considerable resentment from many hardcore fans.

But nobody can fault Mayweather's choice to face Miguel Cotto, the current WBA 154-pound titleholder, on May 5. Mayweather elected to go up in weight to fight the Puerto Rican star, who has won three consecutive fights, at junior middleweight.

For the first time in a long while, Mayweather (42-0, 26 knockouts) does not have almost every advantage over his opponent. Cotto (37-2, 30 KOs), who at 31 is four years younger than Mayweather, is the stronger and harder-punching fighter. He has also exhibited good technique since he was stopped by Manny Pacquiao in late 2009. But will his current form, comfortable weight and strength advantage be enough to challenge Mayweather?

That's what this comparison – which matches both veterans in 20 categories – aims to find out. Each fighter will be rated on a scale of 0 to 5 in each category. A score of 100 would denote a perfect fighter, which Mayweather believes he is. But is he? And how close does Cotto come to matching Mayweather? Let's find out.

HAND SPEED

Mayweather's quick hands – which seem to operate at the speed of thought – remain his bread and butter. Cotto has very good timing and reflexes, which often creates the appearance of quick hands, but in reality he has just above-average speed.

MAYWEATHER 5.0 / COTTO 3.5

FOOTWORK

Mayweather doesn't move about the ring as much as he did at lighter weights but his balance and foot placement remain near perfect and he's peerless in his ability to pivot. Cotto has underrated coordination and lateral movement but his footwork isn't as fluid as Mayweather's.

MAYWEATHER 5.0 / COTTO 4.0

POWER (LEAD HAND)

Mayweather has a lot of snap on his jab, but Cotto – a converted southpaw – has so much force on his jab that he dropped both Joshua Clottey and Alfonso Gomez with it. Both have formidable hooks, but Cotto's is more compact and thrown with more leverage. Plus, he uses it more than Mayweather does.

MAYWEATHER 4.0 / COTTO 5.0

POWER (TRAIL HAND)

Mayweather's best punch is his straight right, which he can lead with but sets up beautifully with his jab. It's not as heavy as Cotto's right hand but his timing and technique is better, which adds to the impact of this punch.

MAYWEATHER 4.5 / COTTO 4.5

JAB

Cotto's jab is a weapon when he remembers to use it, but Mayweather delivers boxing's most basic punch with textbook perfection, and it's an integral part of

Mayweather vs. **Cotto** Official Fight Painting by multi-award-winning artist **Richard T. Slone**. For more details, visit **www.sloneart.com.**

his offense and defense. Mayweather arguably has the most educated jab in boxing.

MAYWEATHER 5.0 / COTTO 4.5

HOOK

Mayweather's hook is sneaky, well timed and accurate, but Cotto puts more of his body into this punch, counters well with it and always does damage when he lands it.

MAYWEATHER 4.5 / COTTO 5.0

CROSS/UPPERCUT

Cotto has a very good right hand, which he often uses in combination with his hook, but he doesn't catch his opponents at the end of the punch as well as Mayweather does. Mayweather's uppercuts are tighter and his crosses are more accurate than Cotto's.

MAYWEATHER 5.0 / COTTO 4.5

BODY PUNCHING

Mayweather used to go to the body often when he fought at 130 and 135 pounds, and did so expertly. Now he's more of a basic one-two boxer. Cotto is one of the best body punchers of the last decade. He attacks with both hands and does considerable damage to opponents' ribs, liver, kidneys, hips and arms.

MAYWEATHER 3.0 / COTTO 5.0

INFIGHTING SKILLS

Mayweather controls fights from the outside, but he's effective and comfortable battling it out in the trenches. Cotto is also at home when in close, and though he isn't as good at defending himself during infighting as Mayweather is, he does more damage with his two-fisted body-head combinations.

MAYWEATHER 4.5 / COTTO 4.5

Floyd Mayweather Jr. has a clear edge over **Miguel Cotto** (left, against **Antonio Margarito**) in overall points but not by an overwhelming margin in our head-to-head analysis. Image: **Chris Farina-Top Rank**

ATHLETICISM

Cotto is a strong athlete with underrated finesse, but he's not in Mayweather's league when it comes to speed, reflexes, balance and hand-eye coordination.

MAYWEATHER 5.0 / COTTO 4.0

ENDURANCE

Both fighters are consummate professionals who always condition their bodies to go the 12-round distance. However, Mayweather has proven to have superior endurance. Cotto petered out in the late rounds of bouts against Lovemore Ndou, Shane Mosley, Antonio Margarito and Josh Clottey.

MAYWEATHER 5.0 / COTTO 4.0

ABILITY TO SLIP AND BLOCK PUNCHES

Fans can argue whether Mayweather is No. 1 pound for pound, but everyone agrees that he's the best defensive boxer on the planet. Making opponents miss is his specialty. Nobody does it better, including Cotto, who has never been that difficult to hit.

MAYWEATHER 5.0 / COTTO 3.5

PHYSICAL CONDITION

Both veterans pride themselves on their fight camp preparation, but few active boxers work as hard as Mayweather, who paces himself better than Cotto during fights and has never appeared tired during one of his bouts.

MAYWEATHER 5.0 / COTTO 4.5

POISE AND ABILITY TO COPE WITH EXTERNAL PRESSURES

Mayweather is no stranger to controversy (most of which he creates). Some theorize that Mayweather, who will do a brief jail term after the Cotto bout, thrives on drama. Cotto has had public outbursts with uncle and former trainer Evangelista Cotto but is never pulled into drama by an opponent no matter how rude (Ricardo Mayorga) or how heated the rivalry (as it was for the Margarito rematch).

MAYWEATHER 5.0 / COTTO 5.0

KILLER INSTINCT

Mayweather will not hesitate to take out an opponent who he knows is hurt (such as Phillip Ndou and Ricky Hatton) or not paying attention (Victor Ortiz) but he doesn't go for the knockout. Cotto, the quintessential search-and-destroy fighter, is always trying to break his opponent down.

MAYWEATHER 4.0 / COTTO 4.5

INTELLIGENCE AND STRATEGIC DEXTERITY

Despite his brute strength, Cotto is a patient, versatile boxer who employs strategy during most of his fights. However, Mayweather is the master when it comes to boxing IQ. His ring generalship and ability to adapt to any ring situation are second to none.

MAYWEATHER 5.0 / COTTO 4.0

CHIN AND RESILIENCE

Both fighters have been visibly rocked in past fights – Mayweather was wobbled by Corley and Mosley; Cotto was badly stunned against Corley, repeatedly hurt and floored by Ricardo Torres and buzzed by Judah – but both veterans dealt well with the adversity. Cotto was stopped late by Margarito and Pacquiao but it took a lot of punishment to wear him down.

MAYWEATHER 4.5 / COTTO 4.0

EXPERIENCE

Mayweather has more fights (42 to 39), rounds (303 to 269) and years as a pro (15 to 11½) than Cotto.

MAYWEATHER 5.0 / COTTO 4.5

QUALITY OF OPPONENTS

Mayweather has faced 16 fighters who held major titles, including surefire future hall of famers Marquez, Oscar De La Hoya and Mosley. Cotto has faced 15 fighters who held major titles, including future hall of famers Pacquiao and Mosley. Common opponents include Mosley, Judah and Corley.

MAYWEATHER 5.0 / COTTO 4.5

CORNER

Cotto's latest trainer, Pedro Diaz, is a former Cuban amateur coach who holds a Ph.D. in sports science and once taught the subject at a university. Mayweather's trainer, uncle Roger Mayweather, a former two-division titleholder, is graduate of the school of hard knocks. Both trainers seem to get the most out of their fighters.

MAYWEATHER 4.5 / COTTO 4.5

CONCLUSION

So there you have it. Mayweather has a clear edge in overall points but not by an overwhelming margin. It should also be noted that Mayweather doesn't have the edge in every category, which probably indicates that Cotto is a worthy opponent. Cotto will surprise a lot of people with his boxing and counter-punching ability during this fight, especially in the early rounds. Mayweather may have to survive a scary moment or two but his class – backed by superior speed, technique and ring generalship –will tell over the second half of the bout. Mayweather will win a hard-earned unanimous decision. ■

GRADES AT A GLANCE

MAYWEATHER		COTTO
5.0	HAND SPEED	3.5
5.0	FOOTWORK	4.0
4.0	POWER (LEAD HAND)	5.0
4.5	POWER (TRAIL HAND)	4.5
5.0	JAB	4.5
4.5	HOOK	5.0
5.0	CROSS/UPPERCUT	4.5
3.0	BODY PUNCHING	5.0
4.5	INFIGHTING SKILLS	4.5
5.0	ATHLETICISM	4.0
5.0	ENDURANCE	4.0
5.0	ABILITY TO SLIP / BLOCK PUNCHES	3.5
5.0	PHYSICAL CONDITION	4.5
5.0	POISE / ABILITY TO COPE W/ EXTERNAL PRESSURES	5.0
4.0	KILLER INSTINCT	4.5
5.0	INTELLIGENCE / STRATEGIC DEXTERITY	4.0
4.5	CHIN / RESILIENCE	4.0
5.0	EXPERIENCE	4.5
5.0	QUALITY OF OPPONENTS	4.5
4.5	CORNER	4.5
93.5	TOTAL	87.5

SCAN THIS QR CODE FOR MORE ON MAYWEATHER AND COTTO AT RINGTV.COM.

DEVOURING OUR OLD

SAUL "CANELO" ALVAREZ (21) VS. SHANE MOSLEY (40) APPEARS TO BE A PASSING-OF-THE-TORCH FIGHT

By **Bart Barry**

The sport of prizefighting, rife with eloquent maxims and eloquent scribes to record them, or invent them as needed, obfuscates often with hope and euphemism. Even second-rate promoters have a trove of reliable sayings to peddle when convenience strikes. Most such phrases are harmless, used-up till they dissolve in speakers' mouths as clichés. A few are dangerous, though. None is more pernicious than: "Every great fighter has one last great fight in him."

Why pernicious? Because it is almost invariably untrue of its subject. By the time a promoter makes this claim about a fighter, the fighter is years beyond his capacity for a last great fight, hanging on, clinching both literally and figuratively to whatever reflexes have yet to abandon him. The last thing to go is the power, a few cheerleaders invariably opine, but this too is inaccurate. The last thing to go is a fighter's name, the ultimate ware he can sell, and since a prizefighter rarely retires if

OLD VS. YOUNG

Image: Etzel Espinoza-Hoganphotos

Shane Mosley will be 19 years older than Saul "Canelo" Alvarez when they step into the ring on May 5 in Las Vegas, one of the biggest-ever disparities in an important fight. Here are 10 historic fights in which an aging fighter faced a younger man in or near his prime:

ARCHIE MOORE (48) VS. CASSIUS CLAY (20)

AGE DIFFERENCE: 28 years
DATE: Nov. 15, 1962
SITE: Los Angeles
THE FIGHT: Moore was still a good fighter well into his 40s but no longer had the physical tools to cope with a fighter of Clay's speed and athleticism. The very Old Mongoose went down three times in the fourth, the last time for good. Four fights later Clay would stop Sonny Liston to win the heavyweight title. Soon afterward he changed his name to Muhammad Ali.
RESULT: Clay TKO 4

GEORGE FOREMAN (45) VS. MICHAEL MOORER (26)

AGE DIFFERENCE: 19 years
DATE: Nov. 5, 1994
SITE: Las Vegas
THE FIGHT: Foreman had made a remarkable comeback after being away from the sport for a decade but his chances of regaining the heavyweight title he last held in 1974 seemed remote late into his fight with Moorer, the IBF titleholder. Then BOOM! A straight right put Moorer down and out, allowing Foreman to become the oldest ever to win the crown.
RESULT: Foreman KO 10

DANIEL ZARAGOZA (39) VS. ERIK MORALES (21)

AGE DIFFERENCE: 18 years
DATE: Sept. 6, 1997
SITE: El Paso, Texas
THE FIGHT: Zaragoza had shown no serious signs of decline when he agreed to take on his young countryman, having made four successful defenses of the WBC junior featherweight title. The fight was competitive but Morales made it clear that the old man's time had passed, scoring an 11-round knockout to win his first of seven belts.
RESULT: Morales KO 11

BERNARD HOPKINS (46) VS. JEAN PASCAL (28)

AGE DIFFERENCE: 18 years
DATE: May 21, 2011
SITE: Montreal
THE FIGHT: Hopkins was as ageless as Moore, beating the likes of Antonio Tarver and Kelly Pavlik in his 40s. Pascal had just beaten Chad Dawson to win the WBC light heavyweight title, giving Hopkins the chance to eclipse Foreman as the oldest man ever to win a major title. And Hopkins rose to the occasion, winning a clear decision to make history.
RESULT: Hopkins UD 12

SUGAR RAY ROBINSON (44) VS. JOEY ARCHER (26)

AGE DIFFERENCE: 18 years
DATE: No. 10, 1965
SITE: Pittsburgh, Pa.
THE FIGHT: Robinson had to fight into his 40s because of money problems but had some success, mostly against journeymen opponents. Archer, a middleweight contender, was no journeyman. Sugar Ray was as game as ever but was outboxed by the younger man and lost a one-sided decision. Robinson never fought again.
RESULT: Archer UD 10

Shane Mosley, 40, is older than the man promoting his fight against **Saul "Canelo" Alvarez**. **Oscar De La Hoya** is 39. Image: **Etzel Espinoza-Hoganphotos**

he can still hear even one encouraging voice, much less a chorus of them, the vending of his name brings true peril.

American "Sugar" Shane Mosley will bring his name in the ring with him on May 5, in a co-main event feature with Mexican Saul "Canelo (Cinnamon)" Alvarez, while hearing a few encouraging voices shy of a chorus. Mosley's signature will be the first great one to cosign Canelo's application for stardom, unless it isn't.

This fight has an obvious cynicism about it, catering to others' capacity for saying something different from what they mean. Besides Mosley's name, it is foremost about ethnicity. The May 5 main event, a match between Floyd Mayweather, an African-American, and Miguel Cotto, a Puerto Rican, holds little ethnic interest for Mexicans, on whose holiday, Cinco de Mayo, this event happens. Alvarez joins the card to entice Mexicans, as he did at Staples Center on Mexican Independence Day weekend – El 16 de Septiembre – when, to support an innovative split-venue show and enkindle whatever ethnic interest Victor Ortiz, a Mexican-American from Kansas, did not, Alvarez beat on Alfonso Gomez.

Since his 2010 debut on American airwaves, Alvarez has littered his path to brand recognition with once-good fighters' names like Jose Miguel Cotto (the elder), Carlos Baldomir, Lovemore N'dou, Matthew Hatton (the younger), and Kermit Cintron. In Mosley, Alvarez will have his first chance to ruin a once-great fighter, in a nod to a cannibalistic boxing ritual – young devours old – only sadists find enchanting but is an established tradition anyway.

Mosley's reasons for agreeing to this anticipated bloodletting are the same as ever: money and stubbornness. In some private way, he needs money – who would collect blows to the head that didn't? – and he summons the same durable will, this time for the task of justification, that caused his greatness in the first place. When he casts about for excuses to palliate recent poor showings, too, he can conjure from the very source: In boxing, the best defense is one that requires the least movement – for a punch badly slipped, one that sets its defender off balance and out of position, is a punch pretty well landed – and so blows that were once slipped but now land are dismissible as evidence of erosion.

I saw the punch in time, the aging fighter tells himself, and moved in time, too. Just not far enough. I'll fix that next time, definitely!

Mosley wants one paycheck more than most aficionados feel he deserves. Aficionados' turn against Mosley has made up for in swiftness and ferocity what it initially lacked in foundation. Even two years ago, one could not have believed the way aficionados have turned on Sugar Shane, who would be taken aback by their derision if put in earshot of it.

There's a sense of betrayal in the soul of this turning. Mosley was an aficionado's fighter for so long, taking all comers so honestly, that this new Mosley, the guy who went suddenly shy against Floyd Mayweather, made an unwatchable mess with Sergio Mora, and plainly mailed it in against Manny Pacquiao, has borrowed greedily against the esteem he accumulated in his first 52 prizefights. Mosley's love of the fight – one that was legend in many small gyms, where Sugar Shane, apropos of nothing at all, would show up and ask for sparring from bewildered trainers and their charges – is now nearly bankrupt in others' minds.

LARRY HOLMES (38) VS. MIKE TYSON (21)

AGE DIFFERENCE: 17 years
DATE: Jan. 22, 1988
SITE: Atlantic City, N.J.
THE FIGHT: Tyson was in the midst of his remarkable championship run when he agreed to face the once-great former heavyweight champ. A young Holmes, with his perfect jab and no fear, might've given Tyson more than he could handle. This Holmes, slowed by age, became just another victim of a force of nature.
RESULT: Tyson TKO 4

BENNY LEONARD (35) VS. JIMMY MCLARNIN (24)

AGE DIFFERENCE: 11 years
DATE: Oct. 7, 1932
SITE: New York
THE FIGHT: Leonard, one of the greatest lightweights ever, returned to the ring in 1931 after a seven-year absence because he lost his fortune in the stock-market crash of 1929. He went 19-0-1 against journeymen to earn a shot at the first formidable opponent in his comeback. McLarnin battered him into permanent retirement.
RESULT: McLarnin TKO 6

ROBERTO DURAN (38) VS. IRAN BARKLEY (28)

AGE DIFFERENCE: 10 years
DATE: Feb. 24, 1989
SITE: Atlantic City, N.J.
THE FIGHT: Duran was in decline in his late 30s but had one more great performance in him, as Barkley would learn. Barkley had stunned everyone by stopping Thomas Hearns in his previous fight but Duran proved to be more durable, taking the younger man the distance in a thrilling war to win his final world title.
RESULT: Duran SD 12

Mosley, they say, should have retired after the Mayweather loss. But Sugar Shane then asserted, and has continued to assert, quite rightly, the decision to retire is a private one for which he has sought no counsel from you, thanks.

Cinnamon Alvarez, the fire-haired horseman from Jalisco, then, will ride in MGM Grand Garden Arena to rid boxing of Mosley, tightening the ends on Mosley's career and allowing historians to begin speculating on Mosley's rightful place in the canon. The sooner Mosley is banished to retirement, that is, the sooner people can say they miss him.

Alvarez, despite his packaging as a consummate Mexican prizefighter – an Aztec warrior with an Irish countenance, as it were – shares stylistic differences with most of his forebears, especially those from the north. Alvarez throws the left hook wide and usually after a switch flips a publicist-like voice in his head that says: "Must throw left hooks now." Alvarez prefers to use the left hook as a leverage point for the straight right, a means of cocking a punch he throws more authoritatively than most of his countrymen. To the delight of knowledgeable observers, Alvarez also leads with uppercuts as promiscuously as any Mexican not named Marquez.

So the ink on the script is dry: The 21-year-old Alvarez will beat down a 40-year-old Mosley to join only two men, Mayweather and Pacquiao, on a roster of those who have turned the trick since 2009.

But Mosley has been finished before. After his decision loss to Miguel Cotto in 2007 and lackluster showing against Ricardo Mayorga 10 months later, Mosley was believed seasoned enough to be fed to another Mexican monster, an obstinate tornado of punches named Antonio Margarito. Mosley reduced Margarito to a mania-

Saul "Canelo" Alvarez is a popular figure in Mexico, as you see here during a promotional event there.

Image: **Etzel Espinoza-Hoganphotos**

cally grinning bitch, remember, taking his spirit before taking his consciousness.

Oh, but that was a different Sugar Shane! Indeed. But so is Alvarez a different Mexican, less-experienced, less-proven, and perhaps less-sturdy than Margarito. Alvarez may be heavier of hand than Margarito, or he may not be, but he is only slightly less heavy of foot and not nearly as elusive a target as Mayweather, Pacquiao or even Mora.

Sugar Shane Mosley has beaten greater prizefighters than Saul Canelo Alvarez is today. But Alvarez has never been across from a prizefighter great as Mosley. It is doubtful Mosley has left in him that subject of boxing's most dangerous maxim, the one last great fight, but he also may not need it to prevail May 5. ■

JOE LOUIS (36) VS. ROCKY MARCIANO (27)

AGE DIFFERENCE: 9 years
DATE: Oct, 26, 1951
SITE: New York
THE FIGHT: Louis could still beat second-tier heavyweights but was no longer a great fighter. Still, he hoped a victory over the young contender from Brockton, Mass., would lead to one more title shot. It wasn't to be. Marciano pummeled his hero, sending the great Brown Bomber into permanent retirement.
RESULT: Marciano TKO 8

MUHAMMAD ALI (38) VS. LARRY HOLMES (30)

AGE DIFFERENCE: 8 years
DATE: Oct. 2, 1980
SITE: Las Vegas, Nevada
THE FIGHT: Ali had retired after outpointing Leon Spinks in their rematch to regain the heavyweight championship but returned two years later for another shot at the title. Bad idea. Holmes, Ali's former sparring partner, won every round of a pathetically one-sided fight. Ali fought once more, losing to Trevor Berbick.
RESULT: Holmes UD 10

Manny Pacquiao (left) made **Shane Mosley** look his age when they met in May, Mosley's most-recent fight. Image: **Gabriel Bouys-AFP-Getty Images**

FIGHTERS AND FAITH

DEVOUT BOXERS MUST RECONCILE THE VIOLENCE OF THEIR SPORT WITH THEIR RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

By **Tim Smith**

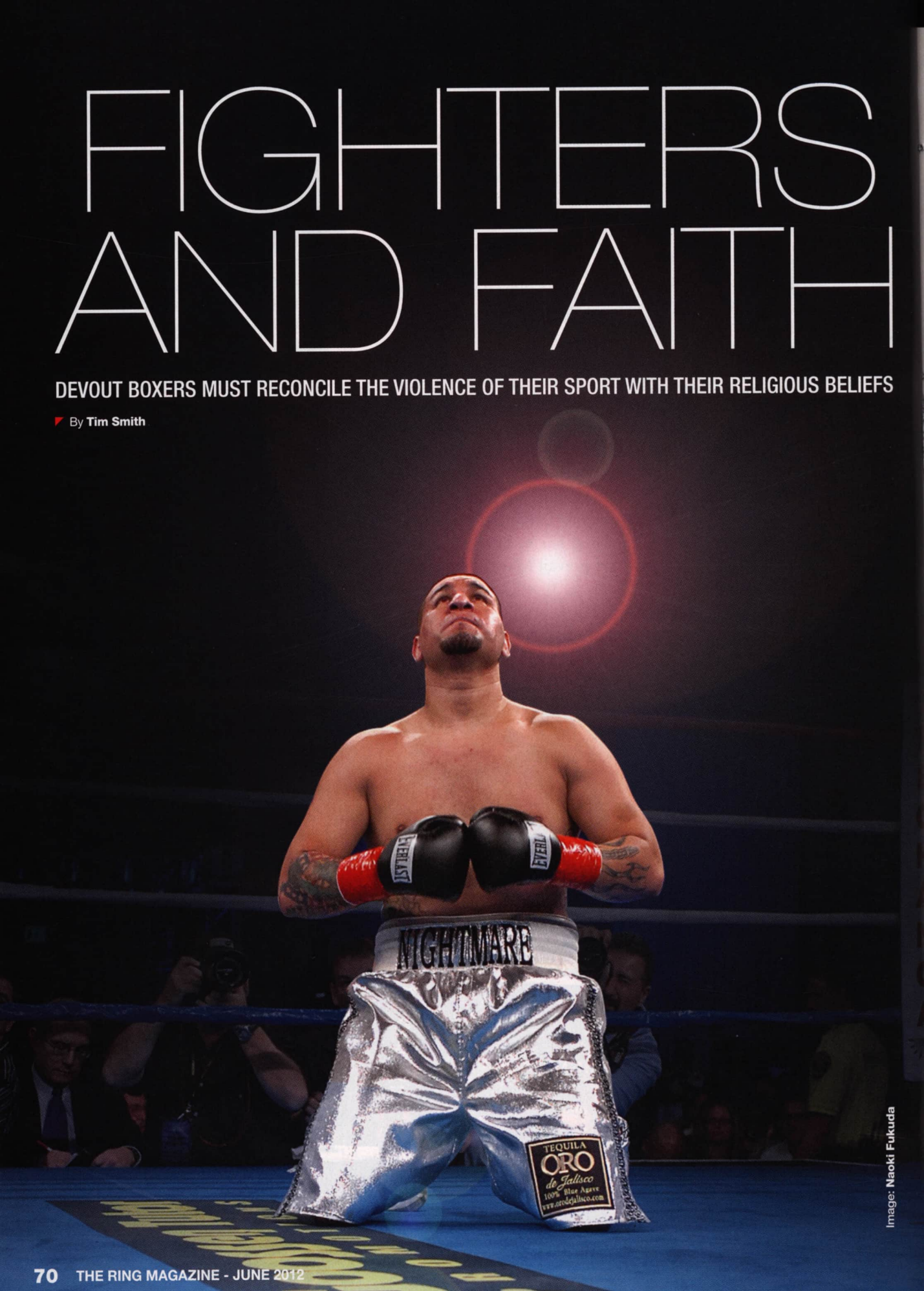


Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

It was early in Andre Ward's professional boxing career, a time when a fighter must entrust his fate to capable managers and promoters. If the manager says you must fight this style to advance, you don't ask questions. If a promoter says you must fight in this venue to raise your profile, you don't refuse to go.

Dan Goossen, Ward's promoter, came to Ward with a proposal to fight at the Playboy Mansion in Los Angeles. It was a glamorous location that would be filled with Hollywood celebrities on fight night, certainly the type of crowd that a young, handsome boxer like Ward would dream about dazzling with his talents.

"I said no. I wasn't going to fight there," Ward said. "It was not the kind of place that I felt like I needed to be. Some people felt like that was over the top. But being there was not something that fit in with my faith."

as fodder in the gladiatorial games of ancient Rome. (***waiting for author comment on following***) Time and modern culture have taken the edge off the moral dilemma of entertainment at the expense of another man's pain and the financial benefit derived from those who participate in it. But it is a more uneasy existence for religious leaders.

While the Catholic Church has never officially denounced boxing, a leading Catholic journal, Civilta Cattolica, which is vetted and approved by the Vatican, decreed in 2005 that the sport of professional boxing is "an immoral enterprise" and called it "a form of legalized murder" and "merciless and inhuman." Luciano LaRivera, one of the priests who authored the editorial, wrote that "boxing (is) contrary to human and Christian morality and gravely damaging to man, his life and

"I DON'T HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS TO THOSE QUESTIONS. I SIT BACK SOMETIMES WHEN I'M MEDITATING ON THE WORD AND I ASK GOD, 'WHY DO YOU HAVE ME IN A SPORT LIKE THIS?'"

– ANDRE WARD

Ward is a devout Christian. It was not the first time that his faith and his chosen sport have collided. And it won't be the last.

Ward is one of the few boxers who do more than pay lip service to their chosen religions. Those boxers who closely abide by the tenets of their faith find themselves in conflict with fans who doubt their sincerity, with managers and promoters who ask them to stretch their morality beyond the breaking point, and with themselves as they wrestle with the propriety of doing physical harm to others for a living. And mostly they find themselves in opposition to the basic moral principles that buttress their beliefs.

In most religions, there are tenets that forbid members from physically harming another. In Islam, it is forbidden to attack the face of another person. In Christianity and Judaism, love of fellow man is the underpinning of the faith. The purpose of the sport and the method of winning during competition represent a potential conflict with those beliefs.

"I don't have all the answers to those questions," Ward said. "I sit back sometimes when I'm meditating on the Word and I ask God, 'Why do you have me in a sport like this?'"

Combat sports and Christianity have always had an uneasy coexistence. Many early Christians were used

Andre Ward still finds it difficult reconciling the violence of boxing with his religious beliefs. Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

Bernard Hopkins, who is Muslim, sees boxing as a sport that doesn't conflict with his religious principles. Image: **Patrick McDermott-Getty Images**

dignity." He said that if the basic purpose of a sport is to harm another human, then that sport is "sinful."

On the eve of Manny Pacquiao's match against Juan Manuel Marquez this past November, a retired Catholic prelate told the Philippine Daily Inquirer that the Church had misgivings about boxing, even as Pacquiao had infused many Filipinos with so much national pride.

"The Church accepts the fact that there's boxing, but it does not endorse, much less promote it because of the physical violence in the venture," said retired Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz.

Those moral dilemmas cross religious boundaries because we presume that at the core of every faith is the moral concept of not harming another person and being peaceable.

For some fighters, separation is the solution. Welterweight Dmitriy Salita is an orthodox Jew. He was able to avoid situations that would violate his beliefs early in his career because his promoter, Bob Arum, is also an observant Jew. Salita was allowed to observe the Sabbath without it interfering with his boxing career and his conscience.

Yuri Foreman, former World Boxing Association junior middleweight titleholder, is studying to be a rabbi. He said he has been criticized by conservative members of his religion about his chosen profession.

"Sometimes those in the Jewish community disagree with me (because of the violent nature of boxing)," he said. "In my eyes boxing is a sport. It is not prizefighting. It's a game. I deal with the criticism because there is always someone not agreeing about something."

Foreman, who is a few months away from finishing his rabbinical studies, said he was a boxer long before he became interested in exploring his spiritual side. He has used that spiritual awakening to help better prepare himself as a boxer.

"I find that there are a lot of similarities between boxing and the Jewish religion," Foreman said. "Judaism helps make to be a better boxer in terms of training, dedication and focus. Boxing is a microcosm of life outside of the ring.

"For example, you have good and bad days in the ring as you do in life. There are people who try to take advantage of your weaknesses in life and in the ring. In Judaism, you have to be a fighter. It gives you guidance in how to overcome obstacles."

George Foreman, who experienced a religious epiphany following his loss to Jimmy Young in 1977, shares a similar view of religion and boxing.

"My religion has enabled me to focus, become a whole man," he said. "Boxing is not my whole world. If you win, it's great. But if you lose, it's just a match. Sounds

Nonito Donaire is one of many fighters who rely on their faith to provide strength.

Image: **Chris Cozzone**

easy, but without religion, losing can be a tragedy. It can cause drifting into drugs and the likes. I found in boxing 'all things are possible,' just like religion."

Foreman said he was in a "dark place" after that loss to Young, even going so far as to think about hiring hit men to kill his enemies. He said embracing Christianity saved him.

Foreman became a minister shortly after his epiphany. But he returned to the sport a decade later. At first he wanted to earn money to fund his ministry, and later it became a campaign to become the oldest heavyweight champion ever. He accomplished both, winning the title at age 45 with a 10th-round knockout of Michael Moorer in 1994.

Some devout Christians have pangs of conscience boxing for money. Foreman had no such trouble with that moral conflict.

"I have always understood pro boxing was about money. Not only was my chin on the spot, but the promoter's cash as well," Foreman said. "So going along with their plans was as important as my training. My faith could not be declared by any date or any day."

Bernard Hopkins converted to Islam while serving a 17-year sentence for armed robbery at Graterford State Penitentiary in Pennsylvania in the early 1980s. He is a Sunni Muslim. Hopkins said there is flexibility in his faith that allows him to make allowances for following certain tenets. There have been times when he trained during Ramadan and didn't fast but he has performed other deeds, such as feeding the homeless.

Boxing appears to fly in the face of several tenets of Islam, such as the prohibition against doing harm to one's body, fighting in the name of Islam and fighting against someone who is not in a state of war with Muslims.

Hopkins sees boxing as a sport and doesn't believe it conflicts with those principles.

"In sports, this is what we do," Hopkins said. "We compete against one another. Fortunately or unfortunately, things happen when there is competition in sports. There are certain things that are unknown."

Hopkins said he has never deliberately tried to hurt an opponent, but he has never deliberately held back from winning a match because he thought he was unduly hurting an opponent.

Yuri Foreman has faced situations where he was concerned about doing damage to an opponent.

"Probably twice when I was boxing a friend of mine it gave me some discomfort hurting him," Foreman said. "But you have to think that they're not your friend when you're fighting. You can be friends after the fight. You have to always concentrate on your game plan when you're in the ring."

It is not easy to explain your beliefs to those who do not share your devotion to your religion. Ward said he has been vilified and ridiculed for his faith by fans and some opponents. Thus, he is not as demonstrative about his beliefs as he might otherwise be.

Yuri Foreman, who is studying to be a rabbi, said a fighter cannot view his opponent as a friend while they engage in war. Image: **Mark Ralston-AFP-Getty**

"I realized that everybody doesn't share my beliefs. I understand that zeal can kill," he said. "So I try to walk a line of wisdom. I'm vocal about it when I need to be. I share my beliefs in God whenever I can and whenever I think it's appropriate."

Ward feels that only one opponent has truly attacked his beliefs and made it part of the lead-up to a boxing match, and that is Carl Froch, his most recent opponent. Ward defeated Froch to win the RING super middleweight championship.

"He was the first one to make a big deal about my faith. He took off on my use of "S.O.G.," Son of God. His fans were chanting "S.O.B." at the weigh in. And he made some comments that it was ignorant of me to call myself the Son of God.

"He doesn't understand that I love God and I'm passionate about my faith. It has sustained me. When I walk away from the sport, I'm going to need sustenance and God is my sustenance."

Chris Byrd, a former heavyweight champion and devout Christian, believes intent is the key to fighting and having faith.

"I looked at it as a job," he said. "I never wanted to hurt anybody. If there was any purpose to it, I looked at it as a higher purpose – a way to serve the Lord and have a platform to promote Jesus, much the way that Tim Tebow has used football." ■

Ricardo Mayorga is normally a clown but he becomes very serious on his knees.

Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

WILD RIDE

FORMER OLYMPIAN **DEMETRIUS ANDRADE EVIDENTLY HAS THE TALENT TO BE A STAR,** BUT THE JOURNEY TO THE TOP ISN'T NECESSARILY EASY

By **Don Stradley** | Image: **Al Bello-Getty Images**

Boo Boo?

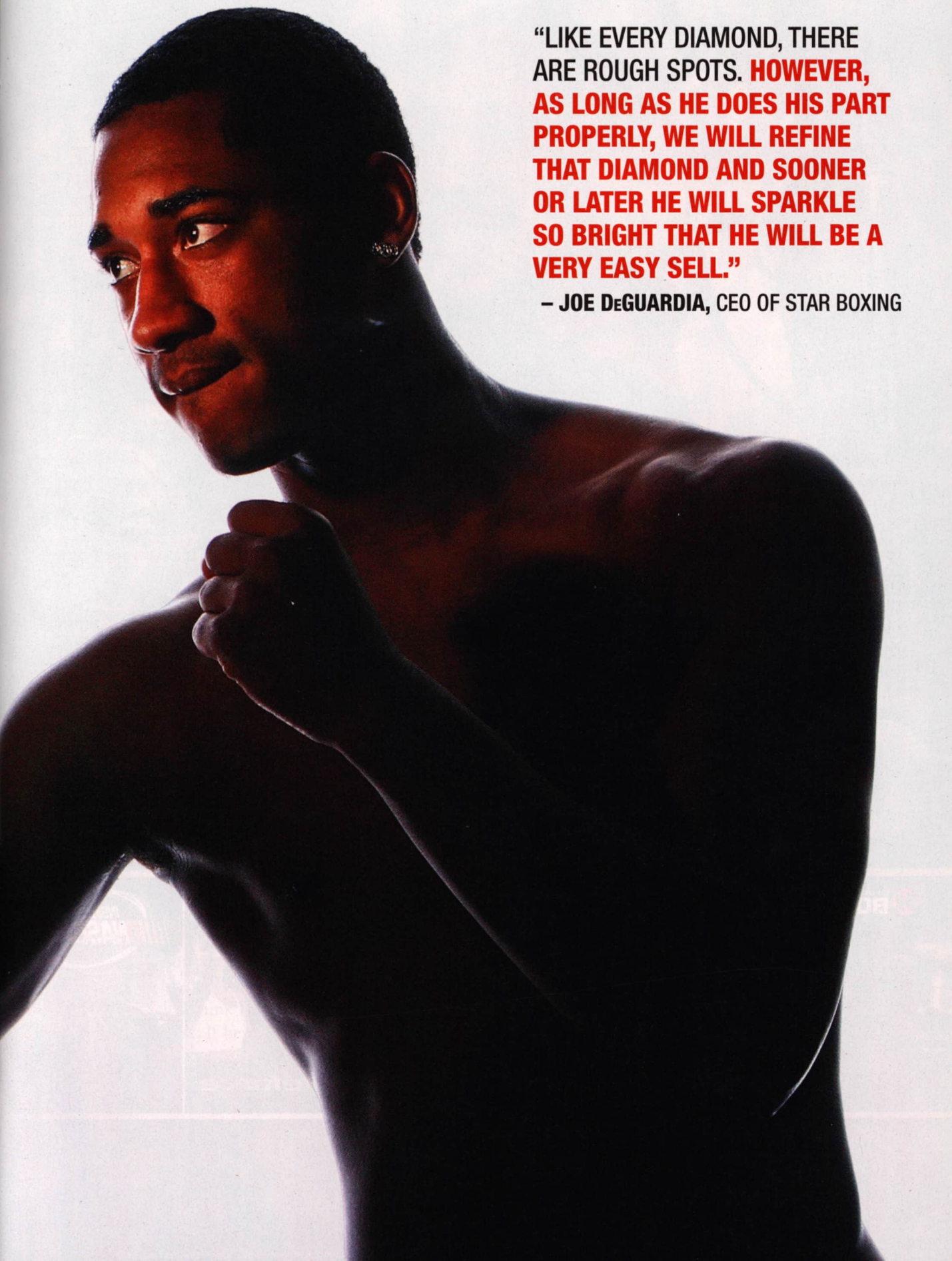
Here's what I know. The tiny crowd at the weigh-in prior to Demetrius "Boo Boo" Andrade's bout with Angel Hernandez last February didn't make much fuss over him. The gathering consisted of about 18 actual boxing fans, a few friends of the fighters and a handful of tourists and casino gawkers (i.e. overweight guys wearing Hulk Hogan mustaches). This isn't to say that all weigh-ins have to mimic the frenzy of certain Las Vegas fights. But considering the bout was a main event on ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights*, was taking place at the Mohegan Sun Arena in Uncasville, Conn., where Andrade, of nearby Rhode Island, was fighting for the fifth time and that Andrade is being groomed as this year's next big thing, I'd expected a little more panache.

Without drawing much attention, the former Olympian weighed in at 153½ pounds and then disappeared through an exit. Except for the fact that he was wearing nicer gear, there wasn't much to differentiate him from the other half-starved fighters onstage. As the mini-crowd dispersed, a spokesman for Star Boxing shouted, like a carnival barker shilling on the midway, "Don't forget to buy tickets."

Joe DeGuardia, the CEO of Star Boxing who co-promotes Andrade along with Banner Promotions, is convinced that 2012 will go down as The Year of the Boo Boo.

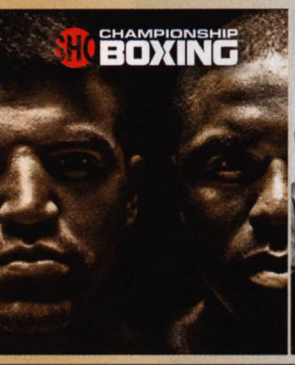
"I believe Demetrius will be on HBO or Showtime before the end of the year," said DeGuardia, assuring me that the cable giants were aware of Andrade and had acknowledged his talent. With a wink, he added, "We also continue to remind them."

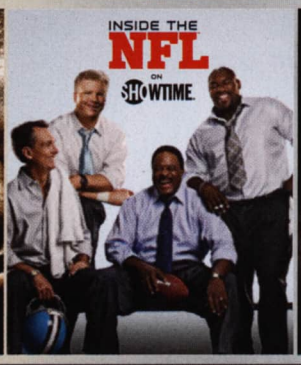
Similar to DeGuardia's most famous past client – Antonio Tarver – Andrade is a lanky southpaw with an Olympic background. Tarver may have been an easier sell, though, for he had a bubbly personality and the gift of gab. Andrade is a showman in the ring, and he's described as a sweetheart by those close to him, but at Mohegan Sun Andrade seemed like a truculent kid being forced to attend Sunday school. He's not yet famous, but the burden of impend-

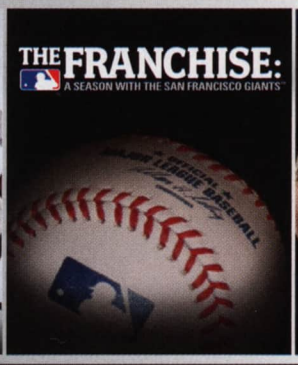


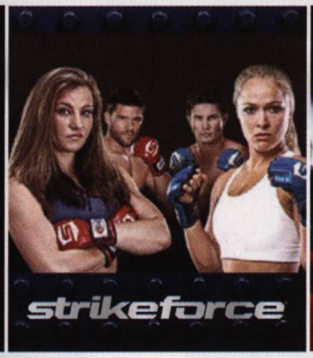
"LIKE EVERY DIAMOND, THERE ARE ROUGH SPOTS. **HOWEVER, AS LONG AS HE DOES HIS PART PROPERLY, WE WILL REFINE THAT DIAMOND AND SOONER OR LATER HE WILL SPARKLE SO BRIGHT THAT HE WILL BE A VERY EASY SELL."**

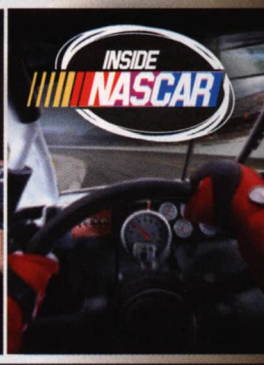
– JOE DEGUARDIA, CEO OF STAR BOXING











SHOWTIME sports

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Demetrius Andrade (right, against **Eric Marriott**) is already growing tired of the burden of pending stardom. Image: **Emily Harney**

ing stardom has already made him wary. He spent most of his time huddling with new trainer Rob Valle, a gigantic bald man who resembles a genie from a 1940s Sabu movie.

"Like every diamond, there are rough spots," DeGuardia said. "However, as long as he does his part properly, we will refine that diamond and sooner or later he will sparkle so bright that he will be a very easy sell. I think Demetrius' future is limitless. If he remains focused, disciplined and listens, he can become the superstar that was predicted when he turned pro after the 2008 Olympics."

If DeGuardia is one for bold pronouncements, Andrade's manager Ed Farris is a bit more conservative. "I'd like him to fight two or three more times, either on ESPN or off TV, before he goes on to something bigger," Farris said.

With his grey hair and earnest face, Farris seems more like a camp counselor from New Hampshire than a hardened fight manager. There was concern in his voice when he suggested Andrade's career is unfolding too quickly.

"This is his 16th fight, but if you look at his record, he doesn't have many rounds," Farris said. Backtracking, Farris pointed out that Andrade is a brilliant stylist and has held his own in sparring with such imposing veterans as former light heavyweight champion Glen Johnson.

"If you told me that Demetrius was fighting Miguel Cotto at the end of the year for a title, I'd have full confidence," Farris said.

The Cotto reference isn't entirely a fantasy, for there is talk that Andrade will soon fight for a title on a very big stage. But Farris talks about Andrade as if the young man is as delicate as an egg and has to be carried gently through a minefield.

"You ought to call your story 'Swimming with Sharks,' because that's what the boxing business is like," said Farris. "The hardest part is dealing with all of the people who want a piece of him."

At Mohegan Sun, a documentary film crew followed Andrade and DeGuardia constantly, their long cam-

Demetrius Andrade was devastated when he was outpointed by **Kim Jung-Joo** in the 2008 Olympics, Andrade's last loss.
Image: **Jacques Demarthon-AFP-Getty Images**

One thing **Demetrius Andrade** has had no trouble doing is winning fights. He easily outpointed **Alberto Herrera** last year. Image: **Naoki Fukuda**

era lenses intruding like alien snouts on every conversation. Someone else wanted to take photos of Andrade for a 3-D lobby display. He'd agreed to it, but then he vanished. He was missing in action for several minutes before sauntering in for a rules meeting with the Connecticut commission, his entourage following at his feet like a dust cloud. The meeting had the feel of a bad day at the Department of Motor Vehicles, with an abrasive Connecticut official giving a speech about the importance of rehydration, and handing out fines for lateness, including one to Andrade, his third such transgression at Mohegan Sun. When it was over, Andrade and his crew scurried out en masse to eat at one of the casino restaurants.

"There's pressure on him to perform well each time out," said Farris. "He doesn't feel it so much; he goes in and does his thing. I just hope people don't pick on him too much for fighting Hernandez. That was out of his hands."

Andrade's original opponent, Derek "Poo" Ennis, had pulled out with the flu just 48 hours earlier. With the derailment of "Boo Boo vs. Poo," Terrance Cauthen was on deck as Ennis' replacement. Cauthen bowed out, too. Finally, "Toro" Hernandez got the call. This created some internet gaga among rival promoters and PR people who alleged that Hernandez was in no condition to fight and was just a punched-out old journeyman. DeGuardia argued that Hernandez was a battle-tested veteran with a history of fighting at a moment's notice and had actually been training for a fight. The day of the weigh-in it was announced that Hernandez had passed all of his pre-fight tests and brain scans. "We even brought in a speech pathologist," said DeGuardia, fairly crowing.

But even when opponents are healthy and willing, matchmaking is a chore.

"We have to balance fan perceptions, commentator's perceptions, network perceptions, and reality when making matches," DeGuardia said. "The real goal with Demetrius is to develop a superstar that wins the big ones in the future. While we of course want him to look spectacular, we want him to progress. It would be easy to match him so he looks spectacular in every fight, but we are looking to develop a superstar, not a mirage. The matches aren't necessarily geared to exciting knockouts, like some other 'prospects' are developed. We are matching him to styles, southpaws, awkward fighters and the

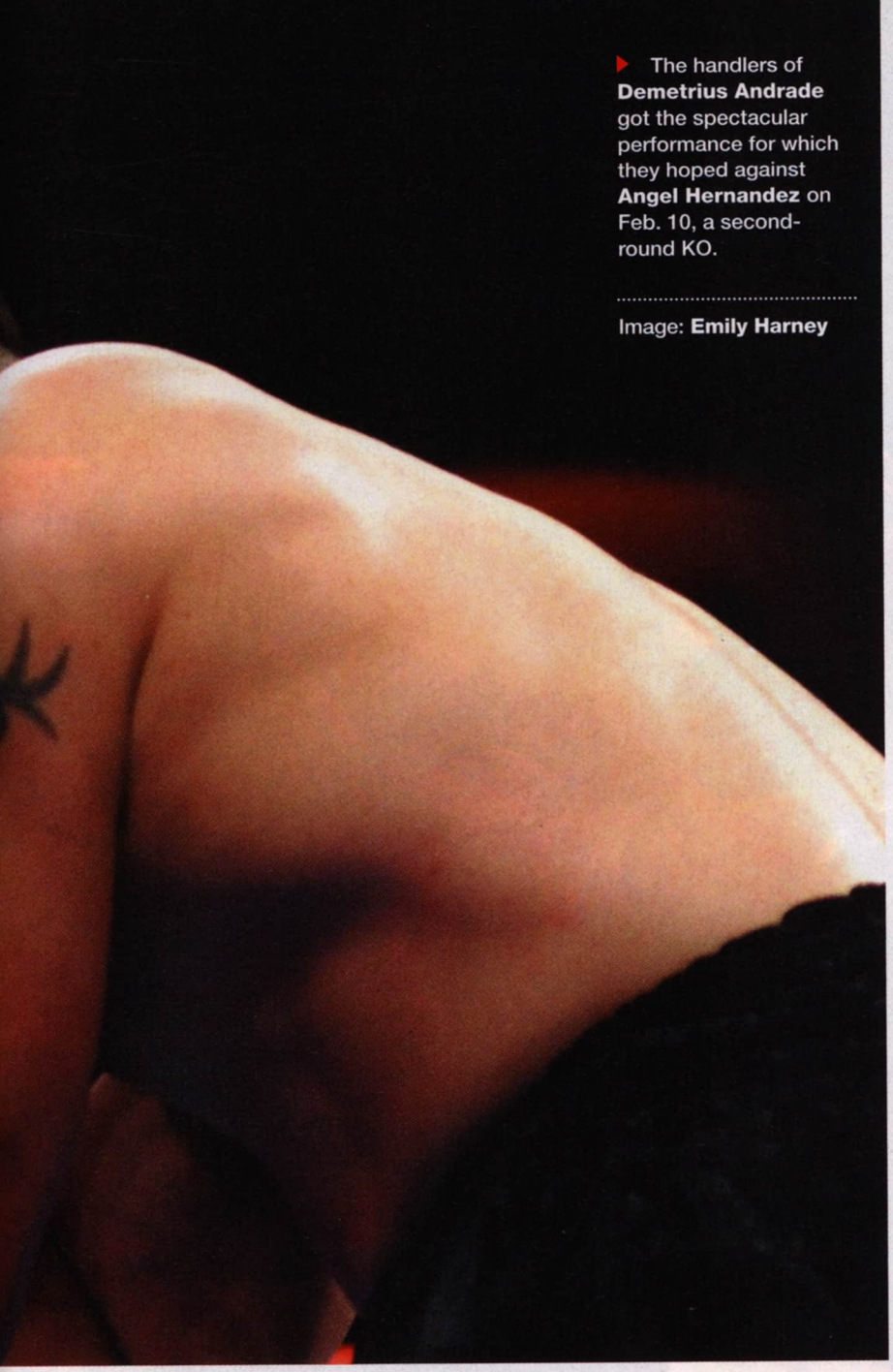
like, so that we build the foundation for the future, not immediate gratification. With that being said, I do secretly hope for an overwhelming, spectacular showing."

The time came for me to meet Andrade. If he is indeed destined for stardom, this was likely my last chance to meet him before he ends up in a Floyd Mayweatherish bubble. When introductions were made, Andrade smiled slightly and looked away. He was not particularly interested in talking, and since I didn't want to ask a dumb question about how training was going, I just said "nice to meet you." He looked thin in his red and black warm up suit, like a pile of sticks. He also seemed tightly wound, like a racing dog.

In fact, there is a vague sense throughout the Andrade team of unease. There are murmurs that too many people have Andrade's ear regarding career moves. DeGuardia admits that handling Andrade is not exactly smooth sailing.

"There are issues with networks, issues with the press, issues with the family, issues with trainers, hangers on, managers, issues with the fighter's perceptions versus everyone else's perceptions. I have to put everything aside and make decisions based upon expertise instead of being influenced by all of their misconceptions," DeGuardia said.

Andrade is also estranged from his father, who was training him until just a few fights ago. Depending



The handlers of **Demetrius Andrade** got the spectacular performance for which they hoped against **Angel Hernandez** on Feb. 10, a second-round KO.

Image: **Emily Harney**

on whom you talk to, the squabble is either a minor one or it's the sort of major family drama that will serve as catnip for HBO segment producers.

Another issue is what DeGuardia described as "extraordinary developmental costs." The word is out that Andrade will have to win a title and defend it once or twice before his backers see a profit.

But the money men might have taken comfort the following night when Andrade destroyed Hernandez in less than two rounds. He fought with a fury, as if he were determined to dispatch Hernandez as quickly as possible. When it was over, the dazed Hernandez looked like a man pulled from the wreckage of a three car pileup.

"That's probably the end of Toro," said referee Steve Smoger at ringside. "It's a shame they let him fight."

DeGuardia immediately began evangelizing.

"Demetrius did what he was supposed to do," DeGuardia said. "Would I have liked the fight to go longer? Yes. But it's hard to find opponents. James Kirkland and many others have turned us down. All we can do is keep rising in the rankings and force fights to happen."

After the bout, Andrade answered questions outside his dressing room. Beating Hernandez earned him a minor belt; he joked that he'd hang it from his front door. Other quotables included:

"I'm unique. I've never done something because I saw somebody else do it."

"I want (Julio Cesar) Chavez (Jr.). He's slow. Nothing he does impresses me."

"I don't think about losing. There's no point in thinking about losing."

As the filmmakers buzzed around, DeGuardia smiled as if he'd just passed a bad check. Meanwhile, Andrade grew impatient, especially when he was asked about the varying nature of his entourage. His voice hardened. "There have been no changes to my crew," he said, killing speculation about his father's whereabouts.

I told DeGuardia that Andrade seemed uncomfortable with the line of questioning.

"It's something he has to get used to," DeGuardia said. "Part of becoming a star is people wanting to know about your personal life. It's not a secret that he has a problem with his father. Eventually, that will be a big story."

DeGuardia held out his hands as if he were weighing a stack of money against the perils of growing up in public. He shrugged. "There are pluses and minuses to fame," he said.

Boo Boo? Here's what I know. He's 23. He has beaten some journeymen. He is supposed to be a star someday.

Don't forget to buy tickets. ■

LAMONT
PETERSON

Lamont Peterson (left) and **Amir Khan** have some unfinished business to tend to in their rematch.

Image: **Al Bello-Getty Images**

PETERSON-KHAN II GAINS BIPARTISAN APPROVAL

By **Bernard Fernandez**

Boxing, and maybe particularly boxing in Washington, D.C., in some ways mirrors the American and international political climate. There is a lot of squabbling, a lot of distrust, and seldom is a true consensus reached.

Consider the Dec. 10 first pairing of then-WBA and IBF super lightweight champion Amir Khan of England and challenger Lamont Peterson, who now lives in Memphis, Tenn., but is a native of Washington. It was an attractive and anticipated matchup of Khan, the 2004 Olympic silver medalist and arguably the most popular British fighter since the heyday of Prince Naseem Hamed, and Peterson, whose rescue, along with younger brother Anthony Peterson, from homelessness and life on the streets makes for one of boxing's best feel-good stories. The bout took place in the Walter L. Washington Convention Center in America's capital city, a venue which guaranteed a large, boisterous and mostly pro-Peterson crowd.

What followed was classic boxing on one hand and a classic boxing controversy on the other. Peterson was knocked down in the first round, a turn of events which eventually was offset by referee Joseph Cooper's decision to deduct a point from the favored Khan in round seven for pushing, and another one in round 12, again for pushing.

Those penalty points, of course, proved critical. Although judge Nelson Vasquez submitted a scorecard on which Khan was seen as a 115-110 winner, those turned in by George Hill and Valerie Dorsett each had Peterson ahead by 113-112, which in effect meant that Cooper's penalty assessments had cost the titleholder a unanimous-decision victory.

That fact alone would have generated a certain furor in a sport where outrage by pencil is fairly standard, but there were other developments that suggested

some sort of intrigue usually found in a John LeCarre spy novel.

Why was what appeared to be a 10-10 seventh round on Hill's card crossed out to read 10-8 for Peterson?

Was the twice-penalized Khan justified in his complaint that Cooper did not so much as warn Peterson for repeatedly leading with his head?

And who was the so-called "mystery man" observed speaking to Michael Welsh, the WBA scoring supervisor? The temporarily unidentified person was spotted touching the judges' scorecards, which is impermissible, and apparently celebrating with members of Peterson's support team after the titles had changed hands.

The "mystery man" was later said to be Mustafa Ameen, who attended the fight as a guest of the IBF but had no official role that evening. Ameen explained that he was only "correcting mistakes" and that Welsh was complaining of not feeling well.

It made for a witches' brew of accusations and counter-accusations that served to detract from an otherwise dandy scrap, while also elevating the rematch to a grudge affair whose purpose is to legitimize one or the other fighter's true right to possession of those jewel-encrusted belts.

Which brings us to Peterson-Khan II, which takes place May 19 at the Mandalay Bay Hotel in Las Vegas. Each side professes to be satisfied with the impartiality of the Nevada State Athletic Commission and that this time the fight will be taint-free and its outcome determined only by the skill and will of the combatants.

But remember, the second Riddick Bowe-Andrew Golota fight ended in a foul-prone Golota being disqualified, just as the first one had, which proves, if anything, that the more things change, the more they sometimes really do stay the same.

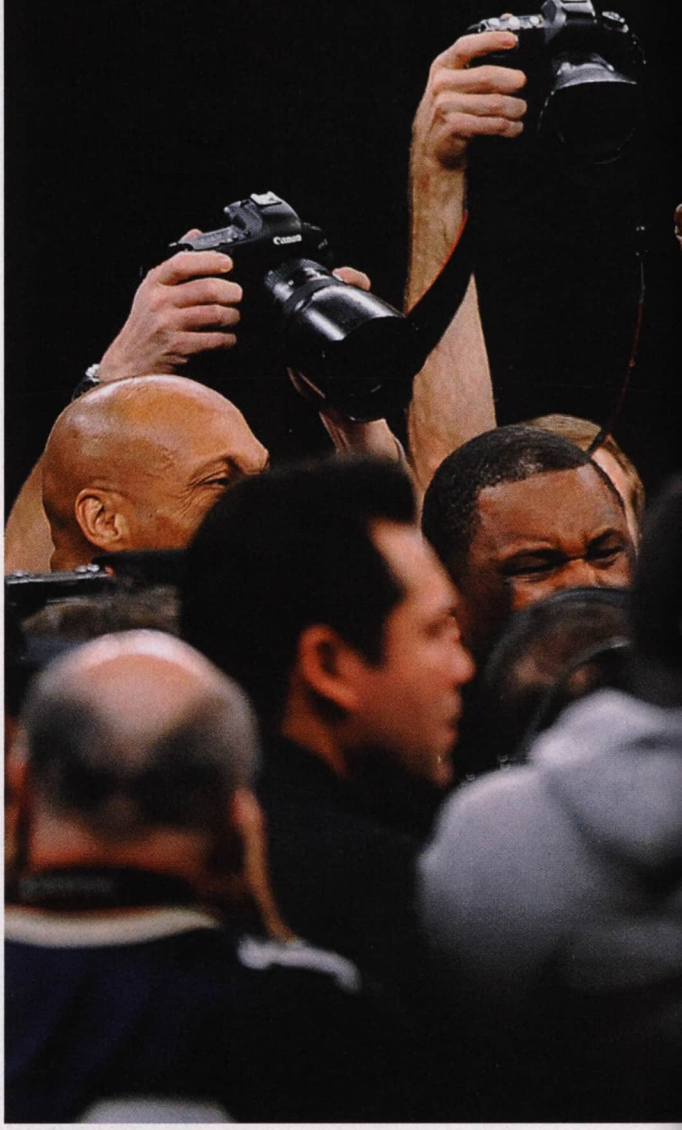
"I was willing to jump in there and fight for nothing just to get them titles back," Khan (26-2, 18 KOs) said at the time the rematch was announced. "Everybody knows who won the first fight.

"The reality is that it was the judging and the referee who hurt me. It's his team that I hate more than Peterson. But he will have to pay for it."

Peterson, not unexpectedly, resents the insinuation that he was the beneficiary of some sort of sinister plot. Heck, the fighting Peterson brothers haven't been handed much of anything in overcoming the most disadvantaged of circumstances. They've had to surmount the most daunting of obstacles to achieve their hard-earned success in and out of the ring.

"My skill level is much, much higher than his," Peterson, 28, said when asked to gauge his abilities in comparison to those of Khan, 25.

"I don't think there's a lot of things he can do. He's going to fight one way. With me, I can fight many



different ways, do a lot of different things in the ring, throw a lot of different punches. With him it's pretty much the same punches, the same combinations, the same speed, the same timing. He really doesn't know how to make adjustments or anything like that."

Of the Khan camp's allegations of favoritism toward him, Peterson said, "It was kind of bothering me at first. I was thinking, `I just won a championship. Let me enjoy it.' I was a little upset. But that lasted maybe two days. I'm comfortable with it now."

Truth be told, each fighter is nearly as flawed as he is gifted. But it is the presence of exploitable weaknesses, as much as of obvious talent, that can elevate a good fight into a great one. Boxers often take risks if by doing so it can advance their chances of winning, but prefight strategies must be implemented and soft spots in an opponent's defense probed. The fighter who can out-think the other guy is as apt to have his hand raised as the one possessing superior physical gifts.

Toward that end, much hinges on the legerdemain of Freddie Roach, the five-time Boxing Writers Asso-

Lamont Peterson had to overcome great obstacles in his life to win two junior welterweight belts in his first fight with **Amir Khan.** Image: **Patrick McDermott-Getty Images**

ciation of America Trainer of the Year who serves as Khan's chief second, and Barry Hunter, the Washington boxing coach who found Lamont and Anthony Peterson wandering the streets and introduced them to the sport in which they have so indelibly made their mark. Maybe even more importantly, Hunter became a surrogate father to the brothers, giving them something of himself that counted for so much more than mere instruction of the pugilistic arts.

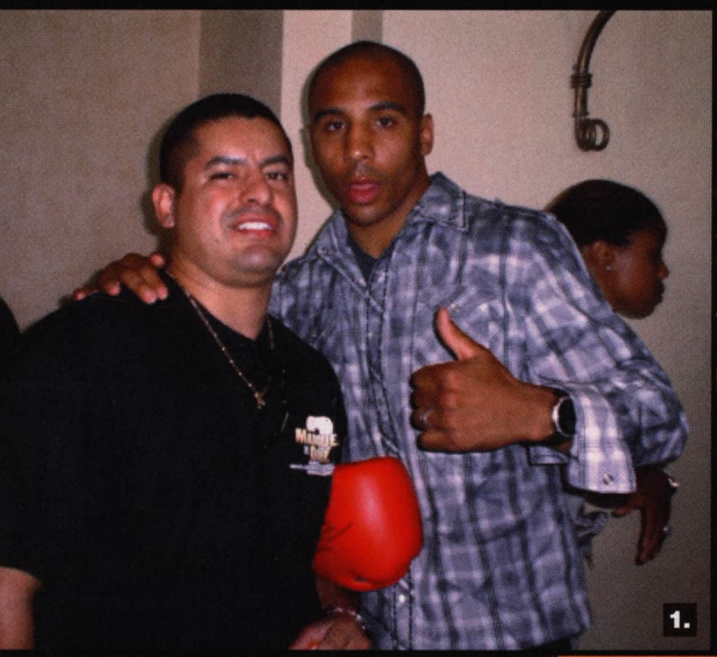
"A lot of times, it would be winter and we'd have on no socks," Lamont recalled in 2006. "Maybe we'd have a windbreaker, but it was still cold. A lot of times, we had nothing to eat, so we'd just keep walking all night until it was time to go to school. We'd stay or not stay, but we always went to school to get breakfast."

Said Anthony, 26, a world-rated 140-pounder with a 31-1 record: "It was important that me and Lamont were together, because there were times that he broke down in the struggle and I tried to get him back, and there were times I broke down and he got me back. We helped each other get through it day to day."

The path has seldom been easy for the brothers, even after they found their calling in the ring. A five-time National Golden Gloves champion, Lamont was denied fulfillment of his Olympic dream when he lost to Philadelphia's Rock Allen at the 2004 U.S. Olympic Team Trials. And on the very day the brothers were to receive the third annual Pat Putnam Award for perseverance in overcoming adversity at the BWAA Awards Dinner in Los Angeles in 2008, it was revealed that the stories Putnam, the esteemed former boxing writer for the *Miami Herald* and *Sports Illustrated*, had told for decades of being a decorated Marine and prisoner of war during the Korean conflict were untrue.

Is it any wonder Lamont takes umbrage at the suggestion that the defining moment of his boxing career, the victory over Khan, has come under suspicion, at least in some people's eyes?

"This is my opportunity to once and for all set things right," Peterson said of the task that awaits him. It is a task that Khan will undertake with no less dedication and sense of purpose. ■



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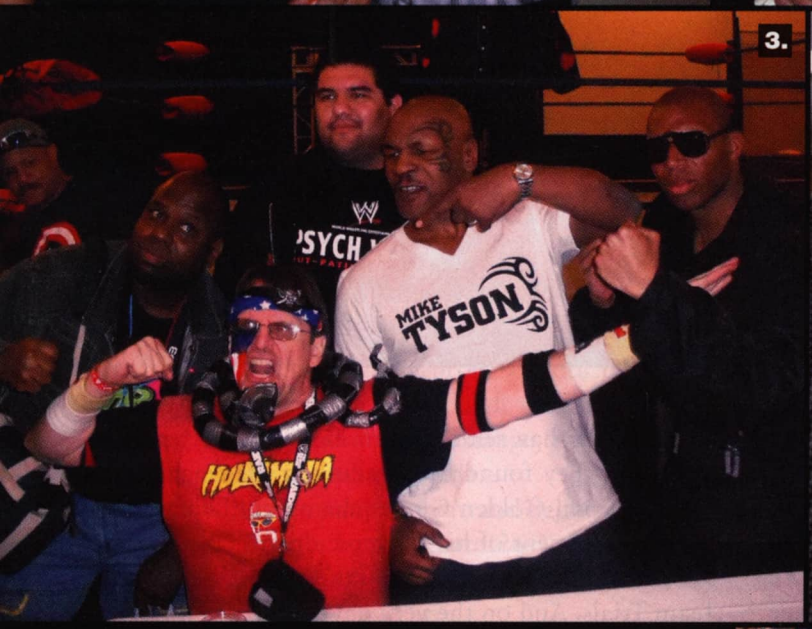

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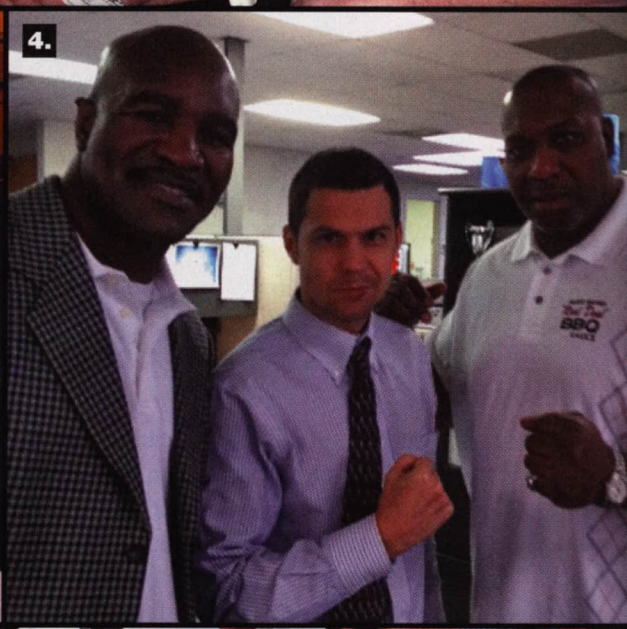

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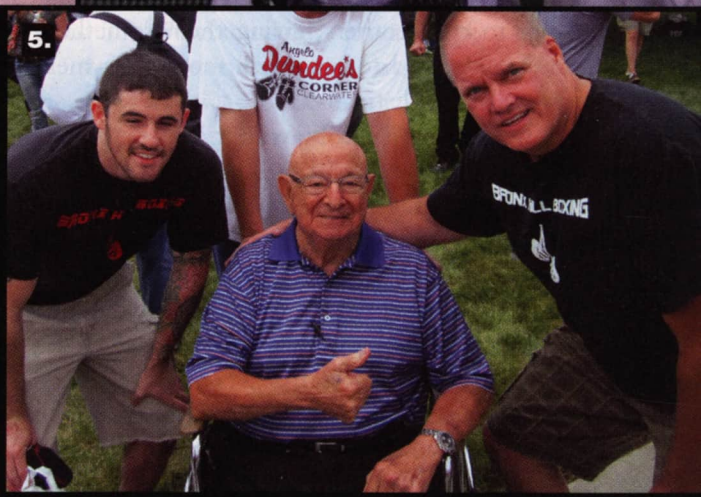

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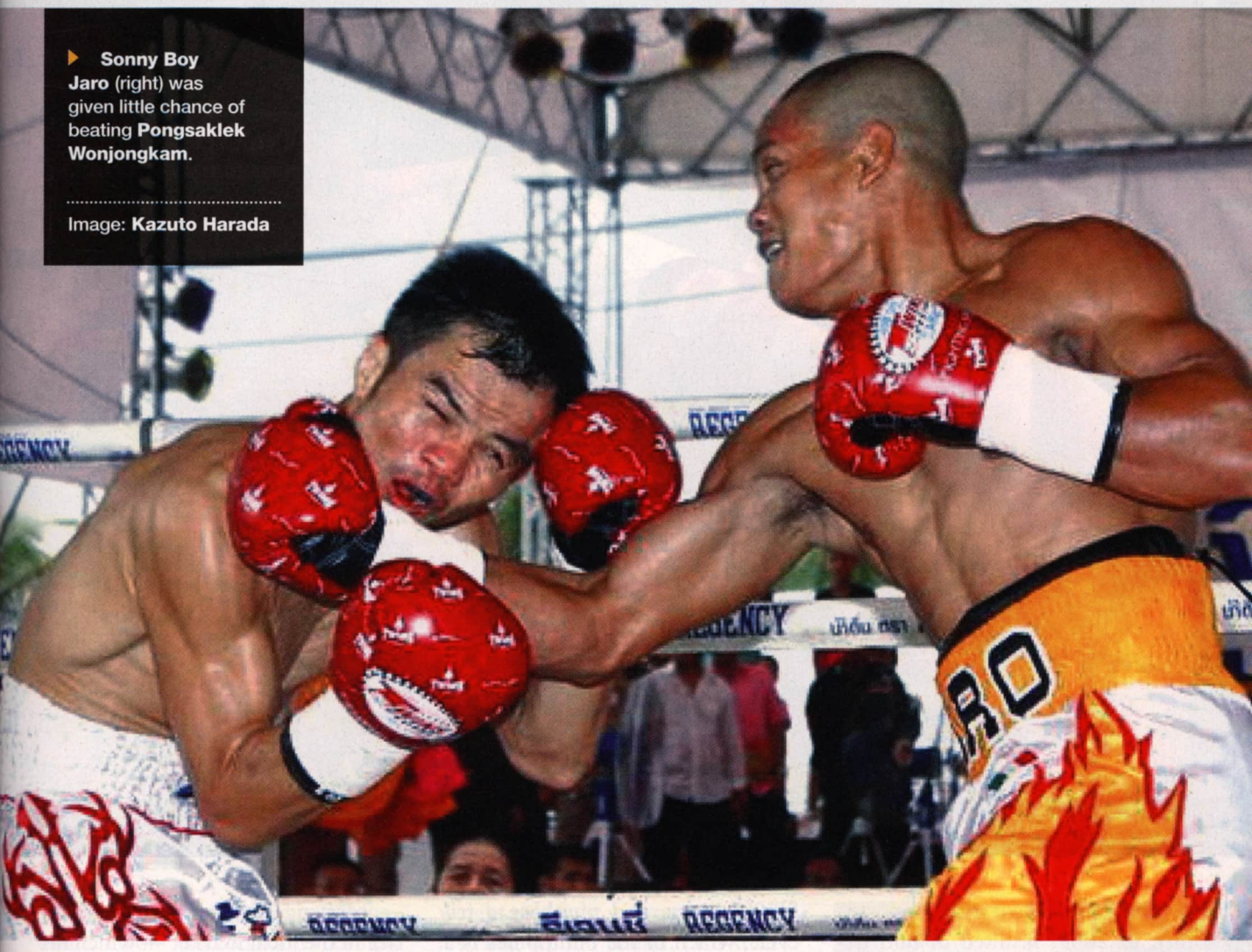
1. David Martinez with Andre Ward at Juan Manuel Marquez-Michael Katsidis fight in Las Vegas. **2.** Gareth Glover of Wales with Michael Buffer at Nonito Donaire-Manuel Vargas fight in Las Vegas. **3.** Jamal Wynn (left) and Malcolm Wildman (red shirt) with Mike Tyson at wrestling event in Los Angeles. **4.** Ryan Auer (center) with Evander Holyfield and Henry Tillman in San Diego to promote Holyfield's new *Real Deal BBQ Sauce* **5.** Zach Skaggs (left) and Ray Doemer with Angelo Dundee at the International Boxing Hall of Fame.

WANT TO SEE YOURSELF IN RING MAGAZINE?

Send us your photos from a fight with you posing next to a celebrity, athlete, or other famous person and we will consider it for publication in the magazine. Send photos to **celebrityphotos@sepublications.com.** Make sure to include your name(s), celebrity name(s), the fight attended, and your contact information. See you at the fights!



Sonny Boy Jaro (right) was given little chance of beating **Pongsaklek Wonjongkam.**

Image: **Kazuto Harada**

A SONNY DAY

JARO STUNS THE BOXING WORLD BY STOPPING PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM TO WIN THE RING FLYWEIGHT TITLE

By: **Ryan Songalia**

RIZAL, Philippines — Sonny Boy Jaro doesn't possess what might be described as "star quality." As he rolls up a blue sit-up mat on the ring apron at the second floor, open-air gymnasium in the Philippine province of Rizal and prepares for a nap, it's hard to believe that just days earlier he scored the biggest victory of his 10-year career. Only the green WBC championship belt that he keeps nearby — spoils of victory after his sixth-round knockout of longtime flyweight king Pongsaklek Wonjongkam on March 2 in Thailand — suggests that his life has changed at all.

That virtually no one expected the 29-year-old Jaro to come out on top is no shocker. Wonjongkam — who had amassed 44 knockouts in his 83 victories — was a living legend in the flyweight division, having held the WBC belt from 2001 to 2007 before regaining it in 2010. Over two reigns as champion, Wonjongkam had defended his titles successfully 22 times.

Jaro (34-10-5, 24 knockouts) had long been a staple on the local boxing scene in Silay City, his hometown, winning regional titles but always falling short on the world stage. Of his 10 defeats, seven had come by way of knockout. He had his moments, such as in 2008, when he dropped then-WBC junior flyweight titleholder Edgar Sosa in the ninth round with a left hook. Sosa would make it back to his feet and win by decision.

Pongsaklek Wonjongkam (left) faced a man on mission in **Sonny Boy Jaro**. Image: **Kazuto Harada**

His most-recent title opportunity, in 2009, resulted in him being knocked out in a minute by Giovani Segura.

Jaro admits that in the past his objective was to show up and collect purse money, not to win a championship. Such as in October of 2010, when Jaro flew to Mexico without a trainer and fought super flyweight contender Oscar Ibarra and was knocked out in the second round. Or even last February, when he traveled to Japan to face Hirofumi Mukai at a career-high weight of 116 pounds, losing a unanimous decision.

Aljoe Jaro (no relation), who has managed Jaro on and off since 2003, had advice for his fighter before he fought Wonjongkam. If he come up short in his third — and presumably final — world title opportunity, he should take his $8,000 purse and purchase a tricycle, which in the Philippines is a kind of motorized taxi. The typical daily take of a tricycle driver is 300-400 pesos, or about $10.

"It's not a good income, maybe just enough for food," said Aljoe Jaro. "But I told him, 'If you win the title, your life will change.'"

These words might have fallen on deaf ears in the past, but as Sonny Boy's two sons, Shean, 2, and Zac, five months, grew, so did his responsibilities. "I fight for my two kids, not for myself," said Sonny Boy. "My plan for my two kids is to secure a better future for them."

Sonny Boy has seen poverty. He grew up the son of a shoe repairman. He assisted in his father's shop as a boy, but his wide, muscular frame made him a perfect candidate for his next occupation — carrying luggage and sacks of rice in the local market — which he started doing when he was just 13.

Inspired by the ring exploits of local heroes Mansueto "Onyok" Velasco, a 1996 Olympic silver medalist, and successful pro Gerry Penalosa, Jaro turned his attention to the ring.

Wanting a better life for his children than what he could provide as a tricycle driver, Jaro dedicated himself to training like never before, sparring countless rounds with top-rated strawweight contender Denver Cuello in preparation. Sonny Boy would later say that, had he given it his all in the gym before and still lost, he'd have given up the sport.

Just to be in position for the opportunity to face Wonjongkam was fortunate in itself. Wonjongkam, 34, was due for his mandatory against

Sonny Boy Jaro had lost his biggest fights, such as here against **Edgar Sosa**, before winning the RING and WBC and flyweight titles. Bottom image: **Ronaldo Schemidt-AFP-Getty Images**

Japanese contender Toshiyuki Igarashi. Upon Wonjongkam's camp's request, the WBC granted him an exception under the stipulation that the winner face Igarashi within 120 days.

Once at the outdoor venue, Jaro discovered that torrential rains had left inches of water in his dressing room. Fearful that his shoes would become wet and affect traction, his team carried him to the ring. Most figured he would have to be carried out of it as well.

But just 20 seconds into the opening round, Jaro uncorked a right cross followed by a left hook, sending the champion down. Wonjongkam rose, but was uncomfortable for the rest of the stanza with the awkward aggression and physical strength of Jaro. Wonjongkam, a southpaw who owns the record for quickest knockout in a flyweight title fight, regrouped to have a strong second round. Jaro struck again in the third, depositing Wonjongkam back to the canvas with a straight right hand on the button.

After the fourth round, a weary Wonjongkam received a lucky — or perhaps more than lucky — reprieve.

"When I saw the scorecard, Sonny Boy was only leading by two points," said Aljoe Jaro. "I thought the corner didn't want to continue the fight because they were on the stool for so long. When I saw the time had passed one minute already and the timekeeper didn't ring the bell, I shouted, 'Where's the bell?' Maybe about two minutes had passed, and he was able to recover."

By the sixth round, a weary Wonjongkam began spending more time on the ropes than was healthy, and he paid for it when Jaro dou-

When **Pongsaklek Wonjongkam** went down, it was apparent immediately that he wasn't getting up.

Image: **Kazuto Harada**

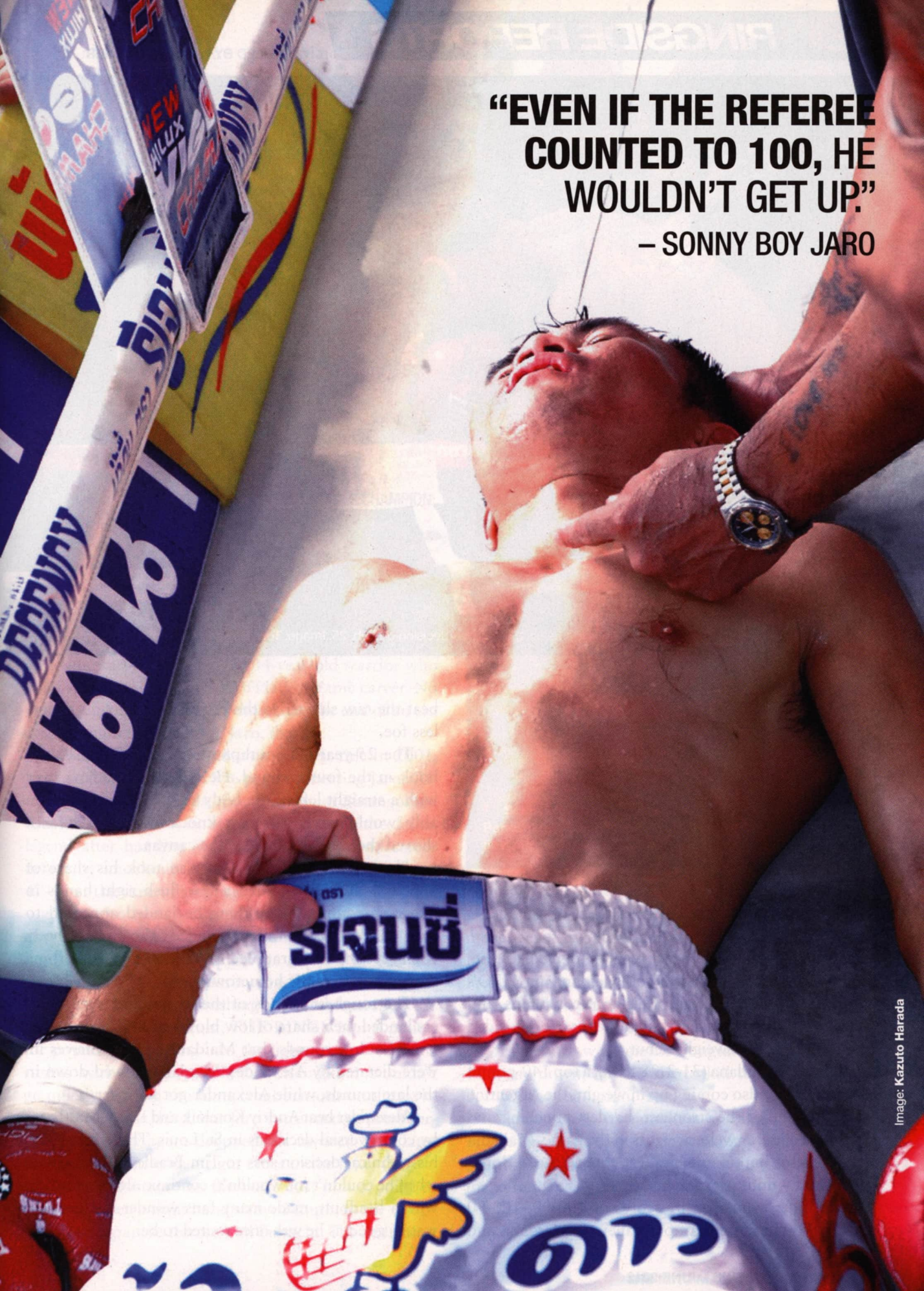
bled up two heavy right crosses, dropping Wonjongkam onto his face. The Thai proudly made it to his feet again, but a merciless barrage of 20 unanswered punches sent him down for a fourth time, perhaps ending his run as top dog at 112 pounds for good.

"Even if the referee counted to 100, he wouldn't get up," Jaro later said.

Just days after returning to the Philippines, Jaro is back in the gym, doing light workouts to stay in shape for his mandatory defense against Igarashi, which will undoubtedly be in Japan because of the economic structure of the sport. Most of his purse has already been allotted for child costs. The Thai promoter who had organized the Wonjongkam fight has two options on Jaro's defenses, which would net Jaro $75,000 for the first and $125,000 for the second, according to Aljoe Jaro.

Sonny Boy must first get through his mandatory, which isn't guaranteed, before he can see that money.

What is a guaranteed is that Sonny Boy Jaro's life — and history — have changed forever. ■


"EVEN IF THE REFEREE COUNTED TO 100, HE WOULDN'T GET UP."
– SONNY BOY JARO
รัชเจนชี่
Image: Kazuto Harada

COMPILED BY **MIKE COPPINGER**

Devon Alexander dominated **Marcos Maidana** to win a one-sided decision on Feb. 25. Image: **Tom Hogan-Hoganphotos**

DEVON ALEXANDER UD 10
MARCOS MAIDANA

DATE: FEB. 25, 2012
VENUE: SCOTTRADE CENTER
DIVISION: WELTERWEIGHT
WEIGHTS: ALEXANDER 146½; MAIDANA 146 ¾
RING RATING (GOING INTO FIGHT): BOTH UNRATED AT WELTERWEIGHT
NETWORK: HBO

ST. LOUIS – Devon Alexander wanted to make a statement against the tough Marcos Maidana on HBO's *Boxing After Dark* in front of his hometown fans, and did just that, dominating Maidana over 10 one-sided rounds in his welterweight debut.

Although Maidana (31-3, 28 KOs), a top 140-pound contender, was also coming up in weight, the Argentine veteran is one of the strongest, hardest-punching and most feared junior welterweights in the game. Maidana has lost fights but no one has ever come close to dominating him – until Alexander.

Alexander, who won by scores of 100-90, 100-90 and 99-91, did more than outmaneuver Maidana and beat the raw slugger to the punch – he hurt his relentless foe.

The 25-year-old southpaw teed off with his right hook in the fourth round. He doubled Maidana over with a straight left to the body in the sixth, and probably would have scored a knockdown had he not shoved the veteran down to the canvas.

Alexander (23-1, 13 KOs) also took his share of punches. Maidana landed a few flush right hands in the early rounds but nothing he landed appeared to stun Alexander. He also pounded Alexander's body whenever the two grappled on the inside, but nothing seemed to affect the hometown hero.

The roughest rounds of the fight – and both fighters landed their share of low blows and rabbit punches – the kind of rounds that Maidana usually thrives in, were dictated by Alexander. Maidana slowed down in the late rounds, while Alexander got stronger.

Alexander beat Andriy Kotelnik and Lucas Matthysse by controversial decisions in St. Louis. Those bouts and his technical decision loss to Tim Bradley, which ended when he couldn't (or wouldn't) continue after getting cut with a headbutt, made many fans wonder if Alexander was as good as he was once touted to be.

He recaptured his form against Maidana, who announced he would return to 140 following the loss.

"I believed in my skills," said Alexander. "That's why we moved up to 147 pounds. I felt very strong at this weight. I also learned from my other fights. I learned against Matthysse that you're going to get roughed up and you have to stand your ground sometimes to get respect. I learned against Bradley that you're going to get cut but you have to fight through it."

–Doug Fischer

SONNY BOY JARO KO 6
PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM

DATE: MARCH 2, 2012
DIVISION: FLYWEIGHT
LOCATION: CHONBURI, THAILAND
RING RATING (GOING INTO FIGHT): WONJONGKAM CHAMPION; JARO UNRATED

As longtime RING flyweight champion Pongsaklek Wonjongkam (83-4-2, 44 KOs) approached his title defense with Filipino journeyman Sonny Boy Jaro (34-10-5, 24 KOs), it was thought this would be another safe voluntary defense for the 34-year-old warrior who was winding down a sure-fire Hall of Fame career. No one thought they would be witnessing the end of an era at 112 pounds. Except for Jaro, that is.

Wonjongkam, who had won his first title in 2001, had lost just once since 1996 prior to meeting Jaro. After six one-sided rounds, though, Jaro, of Binangonan, Rizal, Philippines was being hoisted over the fallen legend after handing Wonjongkam his second career defeat by knockout. All three judges had Jaro ahead 47-46 at the time of stoppage.

Jaro, who had lost seven times by stoppage, came charging out of the gate, knocking down Wongjongkam with a left hook behind the ear just 20 seconds into the fight. Jaro, 29, continued to have success by attacking the body then finishing the combination to the head, while Wonjongkam, THE RING's No. 8 pound for pound boxer going into the fight, tried to time his rushes with counterpunches. Wonjongkam wouldn't go quietly, landing thudding combinations on the awkward Jaro in the third, but Jaro continued to press forward and once again dropped the favored Thai later that same round with a right cross to the jaw.

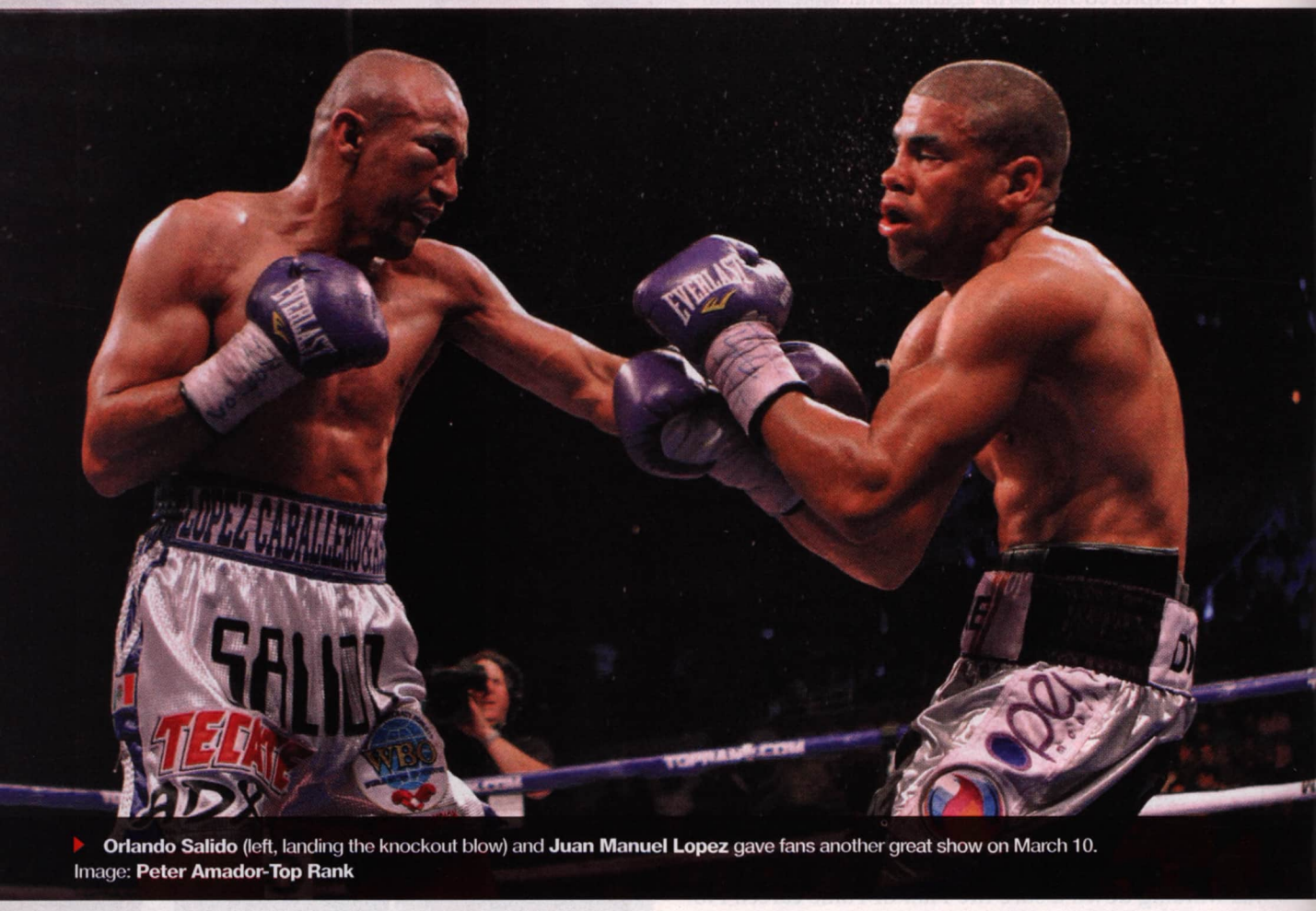
Jaro's persistence to the body cost him a point in the sixth when a right hand strayed south, to the disapproval of Japanese referee Yuji Fukuchi. The deduction would become moot when, just moments later, Jaro maneuvered Wonjongkam to the ropes and blasted him with two overhand rights, dropping him onto his face. Wonjongkam rose again on unsteady legs and met Jaro at mid-ring to touch gloves, but Jaro responded by blasting him with right hands.

Sonny Boy Jaro was overcome by emotion after he stopped **Pongsaklek Wonjongkam** to win the RING and WBC flyweight titles. Image: **Ryan Songalia**

"I knew it was one of Pongsaklek's strategies to calm me down, but I want to kill the opponent and become the champion," said Jaro.

A defenseless Wonjongkam sustained a heavy assault along the ropes before crashing to the canvas a fourth time, providing boxing with an early candidate for upset of the year.

–Ryan Songalia



Orlando Salido (left, landing the knockout blow) and **Juan Manuel Lopez** gave fans another great show on March 10.
Image: **Peter Amador-Top Rank**

ORLANDO SALIDO TKO 10
JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ

DATE: MARCH 10, 2012
VENUE: COLISEO ROBERTO CLEMENTE, SAN JUAN, P.R.
DIVISION: FEATHERWEIGHT
WEIGHTS: SALIDO 126; LOPEZ 125 ¾
RING RATING (GOING INTO FIGHT): SALIDO NO. 3; LOPEZ NO. 4
NETWORK: SHOWTIME

In April of 2010, Orlando Salido authored the biggest victory of his career as he shocked previously-undefeated Juan Manuel Lopez in his native Puerto Rico via knockout. Almost a year later, Salido once again traveled to Puerto Rico, this time San Juan, and stopped "Juanma" again, proving his first win was no fluke.

The end came in round ten when the 31-year-old Mexican stood in the middle of the ring with Lopez (31-2, 28 KOs) and landed a devastating four-punch combo that put the 28-year-old southpaw down hard. Lopez beat referee Roberto Ramirez Sr.'s count, but was in no shape to continue and Ramirez Sr. rightly halted the bout at 32 seconds of round 10.

Salido (38-11-2, 26 KOs) engaged in a scintillating war with Lopez from the opening bell and was the aggressor throughout. Lopez showed no head and body movement – an easy target for Salido's power shots each round. In the second, Salido buckled Lopez with an overhand right and continued to work the body, walking his foe down and applying constant pressure.

Near the end of the fifth, Lopez turned the tide, albeit briefly, dropping the WBO featherweight beltholder with a perfect right hook on the inside as Salido was walking in on a stunned Lopez. Salido beat the count as the round ended. In round six, Salido picked up where he left off, continuing to bounce shots off Lopez's noggin.

Round nine was a sure-fire candidate for round of the year, as they stood toe-to-toe and dished out punishment, totaling close to 200 power punches between them.

But the ninth stanza was to be Lopez's final stand, as Salido finished him off the next round. Salido landed a right cross, then alternating upperctus, and then a straight left ended matters.

Surprisingly, two judges had Lopez ahead after nine rounds, 86-84, while the third judge had it even.

"I knew to win a decision in Puerto Rico, I needed to throw at least 2-1 punches," said Lopez through translator Felix de Jesus. "We were both competing in [the ninth round], it was punch for punch, luckily he's the one who fell. I knew this guy was a warrior so I had three rounds in the bank just in case.

"This was a classic between Mexico and Puerto Rico."

SERGIO MARTINEZ TKO 11 MATTHEW MACKLIN

DATE: MARCH 17, 2012
VENUE: THE THEATER AT MADISON SQUARE GARDEN
DIVISION: MIDDLEWEIGHT
WEIGHTS: MARTINEZ 157½; MACKLIN 158
RING RATING (GOING INTO FIGHT): MARTINEZ CHAMPION; MACKLIN NO. 3
NETWORK: HBO

NEW YORK – The fight wasn't nearly as easy as advertised for THE RING middleweight champ.

Still, the result was the same for Sergio Martinez – his fourth consecutive defense of the lineal championship he won from Kelly Pavlik in April of 2010.

Martinez engaged in a very competitive bout and seemingly in danger of losing his title, came on in the late rounds and defeated Matthew Macklin via 11th round TKO – the result of two devastating knockdowns – before a sell-out crowd of 4,671 fans at the Theater at Madison Square Garden on St. Paddy's Day. The 29-year-old fighter from Birmingham, U.K. of Irish descent fought a spirited fight but couldn't close the show, as fatigue and Martinez's mettle proved to be too much down the stretch.

Macklin (28-4, 19 knockouts) scored a knockdown in round seven, though replays showed it may have been a shove, but Martinez (49-2-2, 28 knockouts) never wilted, fighting out his usual style, hands held low.

The 37-year-old Argentine badly rocked Macklin several times in the 10th and it seemed like the fight was coming to an end. In the 11th, Martinez ended matters, dropping Macklin hard twice with blistering combinations. Macklin beat the count both times, but his trainer Buddy McGirt stopped the bout following round 11.

The scores at the time of the stoppage were 103-103, 105-101 and 105-101, the two latter scores favoring Martinez.

"It was difficult, it was a complicated fight," said Martinez, THE RING's No. 3 pound-for-pound fighter. "He's a tough rival. I knew it was a matter of time, it's just like cutting a tree, little by little, but I knew by the final bell he was gonna fall."

Macklin knows he fought a great fight but faded down the stretch, coming up short in his attempt to wrest the championship from the Oxnard, Calif. resident.

"I executed the game plan to a degree over 6, 7 rounds," said Macklin. "I knew the fight was close, maybe I started reaching a little bit. I started falling asleep a little bit, stopped moving my head, I was a little heavy on my feet."

Martinez keeps waiting for the big fights that have eluded him – bouts with Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. and Floyd Mayweather – and he's patient, because he feels young at 37.

"I'll keep waiting because I'm a young man," Martinez said. "I'm not as old as they think."

–Mike Coppinger

ADRIEN BRONER TKO 4 ELOY PEREZ

In what was perceived to be Adrien Broner's toughest fight to date, "The Problem" handily dispatched of Eloy Perez in the fourth round on Feb. 25 at the Scottrade Center in St. Louis. Broner (22-0, 18 KOs) had little trouble throughout the bout, slipping Perez's punches and returning fire of his own. In the final round, the Cincinnati native landed a straight right followed a right cross behind the ear, which put Perez down hard flat on his face. Perez got up to beat the count but stumbled as referee Genaro Rodriguez waved the bout off at 2:24. With the victory, Broner, 22, improved to No. 3 in THE RING's junior lightweight ratings, while Perez, formerly No. 9, exited. Perez was suspended following the bout after testing positive for cocaine during the post-fight drug test and, according to boxingscene.com, dropped by The Garcia Management Team, which handled him.

ALEXANDER POVETKIN MD 12 MARCO HUCK

Marco Huck failed in his bid to win his first heavyweight bout, but showed he belonged, taking THE RING's No. 3 heavyweight to the brink in an exciting scrap on Feb. 25 in Germany. Povetkin (24-0, 16 knockouts) appeared to be in control after three rounds, but Huck (34-2, 25 KOs) came on strong in the fourth, landing early and often with overhand rights. Huck had his best round in the seventh, drilling the 32-year-old Russian with overhand rights, after which Povetkin stumbled into the corner. The 11th was an exceptional round, punctuated by the heavyweights exchanging hard blows following the bell. Scores were 114-114, 116-113 and 116-112 for Povetkin. After the fight Huck announced his return to cruiserweight, where he is THE RING's No. 1 fighter.

NATHAN CLEVERLY UD 12 TOMMY KARPENCY

Nathan Cleverly pitched a comprehensive shutout against lightly-regarded Tommy Karpency on Feb. 25 in his native Cardiff, Wales, winning by scores of 120-108, 120-108 and 120-108 to retain the WBO light heavyweight belt. Televised by EPIX in the U.S., Cleverly, THE RING's No. 4 light heavyweight, handled Karpency from the get-go, keeping the 26-year-old American at range and landing shots at will. Cleverly (24-0, 11 KOs) was clearly a class above, showing far greater technique, and he was the far busier fighter throughout. Still, he couldn't finish the out-gunned Karpency (21-3-1, 14 KOs), drawing criticism from pundits.

WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO KO 4 JEAN-MARC MORMECK

THE RING's heavyweight champion easily dispatched of undersized Jean-Marc Mormeck, dropping the former top cruiserweight twice en route to a fourth round knockout. Mormeck (36-5, 22 KOs) beat the count on the final knockdown, but referee Luis Pabon had seen enough and waved the bout off at 1:12. Klitschko, 35, of Kiev, Ukraine, dropped the 40-year-old Frenchman with a big right hand in round two. In round four, it was a vicious combination which ended the bout, Mormeck's fourth fight at heavyweight. It was the fourth successful defense of the lineal championship Klitschko (57-3, 50 KOs) won in June 2009 against Ruslan Chagaev. The March 3rd bout was televised live on EPIX from the ESPRIT Arena in Dusseldorf, Germany.

VICENTE ESCOBEDO KO 1 LONNIE SMITH

In what was regarded as a solid matchup, Vincente Escobedo (25-3, 15 KOs) blasted out Lonnie Smith (14-3-2, 10 KOs) in just one round, rejuvenating his stagnant career in the process. Fighting in his hometown of Woodland, Calif., on March 3, the main event of "Solo Boxeo." Escobedo never let the 25-year-old from Las Vegas get started, dropping him with a three-punch combination halfway through the opening stanza. After Smith got up, he shortly met the canvas again, the result of a single right hand from the 2004 Olympian. When the son of "Lightning" Lonnie Smith beat the count, Escobedo pushed him into the corner and unleashed, forcing referee Dan Stell to stop the bout at 2:20.

OLA AFOLABI TKO 5 VALERY BRUDOV

Ola Afolabi (19-2-3, 9 KOs) made quick work of Valery Brudov (39-4, 28 KOs) on March 3 in Dusseldorf, Germany, the end coming after five rounds when the 35-year-old Russian had trouble returning to his corner. Afolabi, THE RING's No. 5 cruiserweight, dropped Brudov in the third round with a chopping overhand right on the ear. In the fifth he did it again, staggering him first with a right cross and then putting him on the canvas with another right. Brudov beat the count, but he wouldn't fight any longer, as referee Genaro Rodriguez called a halt to the bout at 3:00 of round five. The win briefly made Afolabi the WBO interim cruiserweight beltholder due to Huck's heavyweight excursion. After Huck's loss to Povetkin, he announced he would move back south of 200 pounds to defend his title against Afolabi. The two fought in December of 2009, with Huck eking out a narrow points victory.

DANIEL GEALE UD 12 OSUMANU ADAMA

Daniel Geale (27-1, 15 KOs) made the second successful defense of his IBF middleweight title, defeating the rugged Osumanu Adama (20-3, 15 KOs) over 12 spirited rounds on March 7 in Tasmania, Australia. Scores were 118-110, 117-111 and 115-113. The 31-year-old Australian engaged in an entertaining scrap with Adama, who earned his mandatory status with a knockout of Roman Karmazin last October. But Geale was too good for the 31-year-old native of Ghana, and he now looks to move on to bigger fights. There was talk from Geale's promoter, Gary Shaw, of bringing THE RING's No. 1 middleweight stateside for a big fight. "Sky is the limit for Daniel," said Shaw. "Right now the goal is to bring Geale to the U.S. for a big fight on network television. He's earned the right to fight any of the current champions at middleweight. Daniel is a fantastic fighter and I see him becoming the undisputed champion at 160."

MIKEY GARCIA TKO 7 BERNABE CONCEPCION

Mikey Garcia (28-0, 24 KOs) continued his march towards a title shot, stopping Filipino journeyman Bernabe Concepcion (29-6-1, 15 KOs) in the Showtime co-feature to Orlando Salido's victory over Juanma Lopez in Puerto Rico on March 10. The fight was pretty uneventful over the first few rounds, as Concepcion fought out of a tight guard, boxing Garcia at distance. But the 24-year-old Mexican continued to try and break the guard of Concepcion with a heavy jab and power shots. In the sixth, Garcia found success, piling on hard blows to the body and head. The following round, THE RING's No. 5 featherweight finished Concepcion off, putting him down with a two-punch combination. Concepcion, 24, beat referee Luis Pabon's count, but Garcia continued to stalk his weakened prey and pinned him against the ropes, forcing a halt to the bout at 2:27.

RICKY BURNS UD 12 PAULUS MOSES

Ricky Burns (34-2, 9 KOs) made a statement at 135 pounds, defeating top 10 lightweight Paulus Moses (28-2, 19 KOs) over 12 competitive rounds for a wide points decision on March 10 in Glasgow, Scotland. Scores were 120-110, 119-110 and 117-111 for Burns. A former junior lightweight beltholder, Burns showed a nice jab and targeted Moses' body. The 28-year-old Scot was the ring general, dictating the action throughout the bout. Moses, who had won three consecutive fights since his stoppage loss to Miguel Acosta, could never get anything going due to Burns' constant movement. With two nice victories now at lightweight – the other being a win over Michael Katsidis – Burns is a player at 135. He improved to No. 5 in THE RING ratings with the victory.

KERRY HOPE MD 12 GRZEGORZ PROKSA

Grzegorz Proksa crashed the boxing scene last year with an impressive knockout of Sebastian Sylvester which sent the former German beltholder into retirement. On March 17 in Sheffield, England, the 27-year-old Proksa (26-1, 19 KOs) was making a routine defense of his European middleweight title against lightly-regarded Kerry Hope (17-3, 1 KO), but found himself on the losing end of a shocker, as Hope eked out a majority decision. Scores were 115-112, 114-113 and 114-114 even. Hope, 30, opened a cut over Proksa's eye in the second round with an accidental head butt, after which the Poland native seemed to have vision problems. The resident of Wales outworked Proksa throughout the bout, giving him the edge on the scores for the massive upset win.

KELL BROOK UD 12 MATTHEW HATTON

Kell Brook stepped up in class and turned in a dominant performance over 12 rounds with a wide points decision victory against Matthew Hatton in Sheffield, England, on Mar. 17. Scores were 118-109, 119-108 and 119-107. Brook, THE RING's No. 5 welterweight, dropped Hatton to the seat of his pants in the ninth round, punching through his opponent's guard with a left hand. Hatton (42-6-2, 16 KOs) beat referee Marcus McDonnell's count and Brook went to close the show, but to no avail. He settled instead for the unanimous decision. Brook has firmly established himself as one of the top fighters across the pond and is in line for a big fight with the win over Hatton.

EDWIN RODRIGUEZ UD 10 DONOVAN GEORGE

A fight billed as "Bombs Away" failed to deliver, but Edwin Rodriguez improved his stock in the sport, cruising to a unanimous decision victory over puncher Don George on March 17 in New York – the HBO co-feature to Sergio Martinez's victory over Matthew Macklin. Scores were 99-91, 97-93 and 96-94 for the Dominican Republic native now living in Worcester, Mass. Rodriguez (21-0, 14 KOs) kept George (22-2-1, 19 KOs) at bay with an excellent jab and deft head movement, diffusing Chicago resident's power. George, 27, sought to establish himself on the inside, but was ineffective. He couldn't solve Rodriguez's defense and counter-punching ability, falling to Rodriguez in his HBO debut. Rodriguez, 26, is in line for a big fight at super middleweight with the impressive victory. ■

Welshman **Kerry Hope** (top) turned in a stunning upset on March 17, outpointing bloodied middleweight contender **Grzegorz Proksa**. Image: **Scott Heavey-Getty Images**

FIGHT RESULTS

THROUGH MARCH 18, 2012

HEAVYWEIGHTS

WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO KO 4 JEAN-MARC MORMECK
ALEXANDER POVETKIN W 12 MARCO HUCK
DEONTAY WILDER KO 4 MARLON HAYES
TRAVIS WALKER KO 6 KALI MEEHAN
ALEXANDER USTINOV KO 3 KERTSON MANSWELL
JASON ESTRADA KO 2 DOMINIQUE ALEXANDER
MATT SKELTON KO 5 TOM DALLAS
KONSTANTIN AIRICH KO 9 ONDREJ PALA
VICTOR BISBAL KO 3 ROBERT DANIELS
ALEXANDER PETKOVIC KO 2 ERGIN SOLMAZ
VYACHESLAV GLAZKOV KO 5 EVGENY ORLOV
MARK DE MORI KO 4 ROB CALLOWAY
MAGOMED ABDUSALAMOV KO 4 JASON PETTAWAY

CRUISERWEIGHTS

OLA AFOLABI KO 5 VALERY BRUDOV
GIACOBBE FRAGOMENI D 12 SILVIO BRANCO
GARRETT WILSON KO 3 PEDRO MARTINEZ
PAWEL KOLODZIEJ W 12 GIULIAN ILIE
DMYTRO KUCHER KO 8 LUBOS SUDA
SHAWN COX KO 1 WAYNE BRAITHWAITE
WILLIAM BEZERRA KO 5 MANOEL RODRIGUES DE SOUZA

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

NATHAN CLEVERLY W 12 TOMMY KARPENCY
ENZO MACCARINELLI KO 2 CIARAN HEALY
ANDRZEJ FONFARA KO 3 BYRON MITCHELL
BRAIMAH KAMOKO KO 3 HAMZA WANDERA
OMAR SHEIKA W 10 ANTHONY FERRANTE

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

THOMAS OOSTHUIZEN KO 6 SERGE YANNICK
MAXIM VLASOV W 10 BERNARD DONFACK
EDWIN RODRIGUEZ W 10 DON GEORGE
LES SHERRINGTON W 12 OSCAR DANIEL VELIZ
DARRYL CUNNINGHAM W 8 VANCE GARVEY
FARAH ENNIS W 10 DION SAVAGE
MIKE TIBERI W 8 SEAN RAWLEY WILSON

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

SERGIO MARTINEZ KO 11 MATTHEW MACKLIN
DANIEL GEALE W 12 OSUMANU ADAMA
ANDY LEE KO 2 SAUL DURAN
KERRY HOPE W 12 GRZEGORZ PROKSA
SIMONE ROTOLO KO 10 MATTEO SIGNANI
MARCOS NADER W 10 BAKER BARAKAT
DOMINIK BRITSCH D 12 ROBERTO SANTOS
JARROD FLETCHER W 10 JOHANNES MWETUPUNGA
VIKTOR POLYAKOV W 10 DERRICK FINDLEY
LES PIPER W 12 ZAC AWAD

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS

CHARLIE OTA KO 7 GUNDRICK KING
DEANDRE LATIMORE W 10 MILTON NUNEZ
MATEO VERON W 10 ALEJANDRO FALLIGA
MIKE MIRANDA KO 3 MARCIO KUHNERT LIMA

WELTERWEIGHTS

DEVON ALEXANDER W 10 MARCOS MAIDANA
KELL BROOK W 12 MATTHEW HATTON
FRANKIE GAVIN KO 3 KEVIN MCINTYRE
LEE PURDY KO 5 ADNAN AMAR
RONALD CRUZ W 10 ALLEN CONYERS
KEITH THURMAN KO 1 CHRISTOPHER FERNANDEZ
HECTOR SALDIVIA W 10 JONATHAN DURAN
ED PAREDES KO 7 MANUEL LEYVA
ALEX PEREZ W 10 FRANCISCO FIGUEROA
JOSHUA OKINE W 12 AMILCAR MELIAN
TEERACHAI KRATINGDAENGGYM KO 4 URMAT RYSKELDIEV
SAMUEL VARGAS KO 5 FERENC ZOLD
KAMEL MAACHOU W 10 STANISLAS SALMON
ARTEMIO REYES KO 1 VICTOR HUGO CORREA
AARON MARTINEZ W 8 DASHON JOHNSON

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS

JOAN GUZMAN KO 8 JESUS PABON
KENDALL HOLT KO 2 TIM COLEMAN
JESSIE VARGAS W 10 LANARDO TYNER
KAIZER MABUZA KO 6 STEVEN WILLS
MONICA ACOSTA W 10 MICHELLE BONASSOLI
DENIS SHAFIKOV KO 8 LEE MCALLISTER
MAHONRI MONTES KO 2 AARON DOMINGUEZ
PRAWET SINGWANCHA W 12 EDGAR GABEJAN
JOSE LOPEZ KO 6 ALEJANDRO VALLADARES
JASON PAGARA KO 2 FRANS YARANGGA
OSGOOD KAYUNI KO 2 ISHMAEL KUCHOCHA
MANUEL PEREZ W 10 EDGAR SANTANA

LIGHTWEIGHTS

ANTONIO DEMARCO KO 5 MIGUEL ROMAN
RICKY BURNS W 12 PAULUS MOSES
NIHITO ARAKAWA W 12 RYUJI MIGAKI
SHARIF BOGERE KO 3 SERGIO RIVERA
OMAR FIGUEROA KO 2 RAMON AYALA
ERICA FARIAS KO 6 LILIANA PALMERA
AARON HERRERA W 10 JOKSAN HERNANDEZ
GAMALIEL DIAZ W 10 JHEAN ROMERO
DANIEL ESTRADA W 10 REYES VELASQUEZ
EDNER CHERRY W 8 GUILLERMO SANCHEZ
HERNAN CARRIZO KO 6 ALBERTO SANTILLAN
DELFINE PERSOON KO 5 LUCIA MORELLI
REY LABAO KO 1 JAY SOLMIANO
MASON MENARD KO 1 HERBERT QUARTEY
JOSE A GONZALEZ KO 8 HEVINSON HERRERA
ENIS PACHECO W 10 DUDA YANKOVICH
LUCA GIACON KO 5 KRZYSZTOF SZOT

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS

ADRIEN BRONER KO 4 ELOY PEREZ
VICENTE ESCOBEDO KO 1 LONNIE SMITH
JUAN CARLOS BURGOS W 10 CRISTOBAL CRUZ
SIPHO TALIWE W 12 JOEY STIGLINGH
STEPHEN SMITH KO 1 BEN JONES
ARASH USMANEE W 10 CHRIS HOWARD
ERMANO FEGATILLI KO 7 ANTONIO DE VITIS
GUILLAUME FRENOIS KO 9 FABRIZIO TROTTA
JOSE OCAMPO KO 4 WENG HAYA

FEATHERWEIGHTS

ORLANDO SALIDO KO 10 JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ
MIKEY GARCIA KO 7 BERNABE CONCEPCION
BILLY DIB KO 6 EDUARDO ESCOBEDO
REY BAUTISTA KO 2 GENARO GARCIA
ALBERTO GARZA KO 3 ADAN GARCIA
MARVIN SONSONA KO 5 CARLOS FULGENCIO
RICHARD BETOS KO 1 JEFFREY JIMENEZ
ABRAHAM LOPEZ W 8 GABRIEL TOLMAJYAN

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS

POONSAWAT KRATINGDAENGGYM KO 9 JILO MERLIN
FERNANDO MONTIEL KO 9 ANGKY ANGKOTA
TOMAS ROJAS W 10 JULIO ZARATE
KIKO MARTINEZ KO 12 ARSEN MARTIROSYAN
WILLIE CASEY KO 1 DAVID KANALAS
ANDRES GUTIERREZ KO 4 DEVIS PEREZ
LUCAS CARRANZA KO 7 SERGIO MEDINA
EFRAIN ESQUIVIAS W 8 ADOLFO LANDEROS
RANDY CABALLERO W 10 JOSE LUIS ARAIZA
CARL FRAMPTON KO 2 PROSPER ANKRAH

BANTAMWEIGHTS

MALCOLM TUNACAO KO 4 YUKI TAKEMOTO
ROLLY MATSUSHITA KO 1 JI-HWAN LEE
RYOSUKE IWASA KO 1 YUKI MURAI
JAMIE MCDONNELL KO 2 IVAN POZO

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS

SYLVESTER LOPEZ KO 4 YUKI FUKUMOTO
RYO AKAHO W 12 YOSHIHITO ISHIZAKI
JUAN JOSE MONTES W 12 OSCAR IBARRA
CAROLINA DUER KO 2 MILENA TRONTO
JOSE SALGADO KO 5 JESUS LIMONES
HENRY MALDONADO KO 8 NANDO BAILARIN
GLENN DONAIRE W 12 OMAR SALADO
MARK ANTHONY GERALDO W 10 JERWIN ANCAJAS

FLYWEIGHTS

SONNY BOY JARO KO 6 PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM
LUIS CONCEPCION KO 1 OSCAR GALLARDO
MARIANA JUAREZ KO 4 ANASTASIA TOKTAULOVA
MASAYUKI KURODA D 10 RYOICHI TAGUCHI
OMAR NINO KO 3 JAVIER ROMANO
FROILAN SALUDAR W 10 ALEJANDRO MORALES
JUNICHI EBISUOKA W 8 JERSON MANCIO
ARELY MUCINO W 10 MELISSA MCMORROW
ASHLEY SEXTON W 8 THOMAS MASSON
SILVIO OLTEANU W 12 VALERY YANCHI
RUSALEE SAMOR W 12 GEBOI MANSALAYAO
MCWILLIAMS ARROYO W 10 LUIS MALDONADO
EDUARD PENERIO KO 1 ALBERT ALCOY

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS

ROMAN GONZALEZ KO 1 MANUEL JIMENEZ
RAUL GARCIA KO 3 MICHAEL LANDERO
SAMMY GUTIERREZ W 10 CARLOS RUBEN DARIO RUIZ

STRAWWEIGHTS

WANHENG MENAYOTHIN KO 9 JONATHAN REFUGIO
DENVER CUELLO KO 4 KID SURYANA
PORNSAWAN PORPRAMOOK W 6 SAFWAN LOMBOK
JUAN HERNANDEZ W 8 ULISES LARA

RISKY BUSINESS?

DOCTORS AREN'T CLEAR ON THE DANGERS OF A BOXER FIGHTING AFTER RETURNING FROM A BRAIN INJURY.

By: **Dr. Margaret Goodman**

The effects of punches to a boxer's brain differ significantly. This leaves commissions and physicians to determine the risks when licensing a fighter with a neurological history, such as a brain bleed or hemorrhage. Former middleweight champion Jermain Taylor, who survived a subdural hematoma (SDH) in a knockout loss to Arthur Abraham in 2009, has been given the green light to compete by Nevada and California. The regulatory bodies believed Taylor demonstrated his fitness to box. Time will tell whether this was the right decision.

SDH is the major cause of death in boxing. It occurs on the surface of the brain and can be acute (immediate onset) or chronic (delayed onset). Depending on the extent of the bleeding, various neurological symptoms occur — some requiring the need for emergency surgery to relieve pressure on the brain. The symptoms can include seizures, loss of consciousness, paralysis, confusion, memory loss, gait imbalance, headaches or death.

In an article posted on WebMD entitled *Subdural Hematomas in Boxing: the Spectrum of Consequences: Illustrative Cases*, the authors presented an unbiased compilation of six cases ranging from minimal symptoms to life-threatening conditions, to the development of dementia pugilistica ("punch-drunk" syndrome).

Two of the fighters with minimal symptoms following their SHD did not require surgery. One continued his amateur career after the bleeding reabsorbed, reportedly without serious consequences. No fighter was named in the article but the information parallels the history of former heavyweight contender Joe Mesi. Mesi developed two subdural hematomas in 2004, returned to box in seven fights, and retired in 2007 without known neurological problems. At the other end of the scale, one male and two female fighters had surgery. One died and the other required extensive rehabilitation for ongoing problems. The last case described an elderly retired fighter whose brain scan showed significant brain tissue loss. He is in a long-term care facility for confusion and combativeness.

I could site many other cases. Former middleweight champion Gerald McClellan, who suffered severe brain bleeding after his 1995 fight against Nigel Benn, and Leavander Johnson, who died in 2005 following his fight with Jesus Chavez, are only two examples.

Maryland Chief Ringside Physician and neurologist John Stiller is all-too familiar with a subdural hematoma in a boxer.

"In the case where I was involved, I believe the boxer was fortunate that the referee stopped the bout when he did," said Stiller. I would venture to say many, and probably most officials would have let the bout continue [as the determined boxer was still fighting back]. ... On arrival to the hospital, the boxer had only minor symptoms, but already had significant brain swelling. I suggest if

Jermain Taylor was given clearance to fight two years after suffering a brain injury against **Arthur Abraham**. Image: **Matthias Kern-Getty Images**

the bout was not stopped when it was, he would have been subjected to more bleeding with a significant increased chance of death or severe neurological sequelae."

Pat Pannella, executive director of the Maryland State Athletic Commission, and its chief attorney, Bruce Spizler, worked to ensure that specific language contained in Fight Fax demonstrated this fighter should remain on permanent suspension and that any commission that considered allowing him to fight would think twice. (Fight Fax is the official record-keeping system of the Association of Boxing Commissions.)

Stiller places the reality of this in perspective. "If this boxer was permitted to box again, there'd be a note in his Fight Fax that in effect states, '... he tolerates intracranial bleeding and continues to fight back ...' as relevant information for the ringside physician and referee to stop the bout after a certain amount of head blows, even if the boxer continues to be competitive."

Taylor declared during his September 2011 hearing that by reuniting with his original trainer Pat Burns, no longer fighting too high a weight class and not having to lose too much weight in training camp, "I've learned my lesson. Now I know the consequences." The NSAC's medical advisory board had previously reviewed extensive medical records that included opinions from physicians at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., and the Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health in Las Vegas, all clearing Taylor to resume his boxing career.

Passing all his current medical exams is not sufficient reasoning to prove fitness to box. This ignores the importance of predisposing factors that exist in many medical disorders.

Not specifically referencing Taylor, Stiller adds, "... this illustrates the absurdity of licensing such a boxer. Instead of being grateful that the SDH did not cause permanent harm or death and approach it as a fortunate warning to retire for a boxer that may have a predisposition

Jermain Taylor (left) stopped **Jessie Nicklow** in eight rounds in his first fight back after suffering a brain injury.
Image: **Tom Casino-Showtime**

to suffer a SDH, the boxer is going to tempt fate and give it another shot."

"In my view, it is not only wrong but dangerous as it communicates to the boxer with authority that there is no increased risk," Stiller continued. "The commissions that allow licensing of such a boxer should be honest and tell the boxer they do not know if there is an increased risk."

On Dec. 30, 2011, two years after the Abraham fight, Taylor scored a technical knockout against Jessie Nicklow in California. Does this prove Taylor and others who have returned to boxing after a brain injury are at no greater risk than another boxer who has not suffered a brain hemorrhage? I hope so … but I don't know.

Commissions and physicians continue to argue this issue. If I had still been with the Nevada commission as their medical advisory board chairman, I would have voted against licensure *until* I was provided corroborating research data or statistics.

Call me old-fashioned, but I believe in erring on the side of caution when it comes to safety.

COMMENTARY: FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR. AND PED TESTING

As founder and President of the Voluntary Anti-Doping Association, a non-profit organization that enables fighters to submit to performance enhancing drug testing, it would be wrong to say I don't "have a dog in this fight." I do! I have previously commended Floyd Mayweather Jr. for working with the U.S. Anti-Doping Association to require that he and his opponent undergo unannounced random testing leading up to a bout.

Mayweather Promotions fighters Deandre Latimore and Jessie Vargas co-headlined a card televised Feb. 24 on Showtime in Las Vegas. Neither fighter nor their opponents were subjected to testing beyond Nevada's minor testing profile. I was told there were issues putting the card together.

Mayweather has an incredible opportunity to further the cause of clean fights. I encourage him to begin a year-round program of unannounced random testing with all boxers under contract with his promotional company. This could succeed when commissions continue to fail. ■

Katie Taylor of Ireland (left) is considered by many to be the best amateur woman fighter. Image: **Claus Fisker-Getty Images**

EUROPEANS WILL HAVE AN ADVANTAGE IN LONDON

By: **David A. Avila**

England was the birthplace of men's boxing more than three centuries ago, so it's fitting that London is where women will get their first shot at Olympic gold in the ring.

With the victory of recognition for their sport behind them, however, some women may find getting to the medal podium more difficult than others. Counterparts in the well-established world of male amateur boxing have long complained about judges' bias toward certain styles, and female athletes will find things no different for them.

In women's amateur boxing, European fighters dominate, partly due to styles tailored to take advantage of a scoring system with which they are familiar.

Seniesa Estrada, a former U.S. National flyweight champion now fighting professionally, said that the computerized point system of international boxing differs from what North Americans expect.

"Girls from other countries are used to keeping the hands high and not moving their heads. U.S. girls work more on footwork and movement," Estrada said. "The judges like the European style."

Despite any suspected favoritism, though, the female boxing world remains enthusiastic about its Olympic debut.

For countless millions of viewers, it will be their first glimpse at the women who will be representing their nations. Boxing has taken root in Asia, Africa, Australia, Europe, North America, South America and the Pacific Islands, and girls and women everywhere are taking up the sport with relish, despite a perceived danger in amateur boxing programs.

"The worst thing that can happen in amateur boxing is a bloody nose," said Mando Muniz a former Olympic boxing participant in 1968. "Amateur boxing is a great sport."

Two generations of boxers honed their craft waiting patiently for an opportunity to show off their boxing skills. Finally, the moment has arrived.

Three weight classes will be exhibited in the inaugural Olympics: The 112-pound flyweights, 132-pound lightweights and 165-pound super middleweights.

Since the female amateur boxing boom in the mid 1990s the European nations and North American continent saw their boxers lead the way. One of the current queens of female amateur boxing comes from Ireland.

SIMPLY THE BEST

Katie Taylor, 26, has reigned as the best amateur female boxer for the past six years. The native of Wicklow, Ireland has more than 100 amateur fights and numerous medals and lightweight world championships. Many recognize Taylor as simply the best amateur boxer in the world.

"She has quite a traditional upright European style. She's relatively tall and likes to control the center of the ring. She's very effective at what she does," said Irish boxing writer Ronan Keenan. "One weakness of hers is head movement. But she's very strong."

Taylor enjoys superstar status in not only her country but in Europe as well.

"Katie has already become a mainstream star in Ireland and I expect an even stronger interest in female boxing after the Olympics this summer," Keenan said.

Strong boxing programs established in Russia, China and India are also expected to contend for the medals and will be looking to topple Taylor's long reign in the 132-pound division.

Liz Parr, who fought as an amateur under her given name Elizabeth Quevedo, had always hoped to fight in the Olympics. That dream didn't transpire so she moved on. But she fought internationally for several years with the USA Boxing team and is very familiar with what the rest of the world has to offer boxing-wise.

One difference has been the ages of amateur boxers in countries other than North America and South America.

"Girls in Europe and Asia are usually much older," said Parr. "They're given stipends so they stay in the sport much longer."

Parr said the added years give international boxers an edge in worldwide competition because they are more familiar with its most crucial aspect: scoring.

"Many of the girls in Russia, Germany, and the rest of Europe have a lot of experience in international boxing. They know all the little tricks on how to score points," said Parr, adding that international judging is starkly different from American judging. "You can hit someone hard to the body a dozen times and the judges won't give you a single point. But if they just touch you to the face, they score points.

"China and India have really strong teams, too. They don't hit hard but they're taught how to score points with little punches."

Estrada, who fights out of East Los Angeles, agrees that the system favors certain punches over others. "It was a lot different scoring internationally," she said. "They weren't really counting my body punches that I landed."

Estrada and Parr both expect the women from Europe and Asia to have an advantage due to familiarity with the scoring system, but will they dominate at the Olympic Games?

Vaia Zaganas, a former Canadian National Champion, said the European competitors do have a distinct advantage, but that this must be weighed against the event itself. In the end, competing on the world stage is priceless.

"It's cool fighting for your country against other countries," said Zaganas.

BOXING NOTES

ARGENTINA'S CAROLINA DUER (11-3, 4 KOS) stopped Italy's Milena Tronto (6-2-1) at the end of round two of their world title match. It was Duer's fourth consecutive defense of the WBO junior bantamweight title. The bout was held in Buenos Aires on March 3.

FORMER FLYWEIGHT CHAMPION ARELY MUCINO (14-1-1) OF MEXICO defeated California's Melissa McMorrow (6-2-3) by split decision for the number one spot on the WBA flyweight rankings. Their match occurred in Guadalajara, Mexico on February 25. Mucino is a former flyweight world champion.

AUSTRALIA'S SUSIE RAMADAN (22-1, 8 KOS) defeated Alesia Graf (25-3, 10 KOs) by split decision on Feb. 24. Their bantamweight match was held in Victoria, Australia. It was Ramadan's first fight after losing the IBF title in Mexico by split decision.

IBF BANTAMWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER YAZMIN RIVAS (24-7, 9 KOS) kept her title against Argentina's Edith Matthysse (9-4-1) on Feb. 4. The world title bout took place in Tamaulipas, Mexico where Rivas won by unanimous decision.

MEXICO'S JACKIE NAVA (26-4-3, 11 KOS) captured the WBA junior featherweight world title from Panama's Chanttall Martinez (15-5, 6 KOs) on January 28. It was the second time that Nava had defeated Martinez. Both took place in Mexico and ended by unanimous decision. Nava, who fights out of Tijuana, Mexico, had lost her WBC title to Ana Maria Torres this past summer.

ZULINA MUNOZ (33-1-2, 23 KOS) won by technical knockout over Paulina Cardona (19-11-4, 7 KOs) on January 28. The fight was stopped at 1:40 of round three of their bantamweight fight in Mexico City. ■

PREPARING FOR A MEGA FIGHT

By: **Chuck Giampa**

One reason boxing judges sometimes get scoring wrong is a lack of mental and physical preparation. This is particularly prevalent in the biggest fights.

Floyd Mayweather Jr. faces Miguel Cotto on May 5 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, one of the most-important fights of the year. This is how I would prepare if I were assigned to be one of the three judges.

I would start my mental and physical preparation one week prior to the fight.

I wouldn't read anything about the fight for a full week to avoid developing preconceptions. I know of judges and referees who take the opposite approach: They contact the trainers of the fighters in their upcoming fights to find out how training is progressing and inquire about the strategy. They say this helps them for the fight. I not only disagree with this philosophy but I believe it is unethical to have any contact with those connected to the fighters they will judge.

I would restrict my diet to easily digested food for that week. I want to feel good physically at the time of the fight. I also would consume no alcohol within 48 hours of the fight, including wine during dinner.

I would block out any distractions the day before and of the fight, including any discussions about the fight itself.

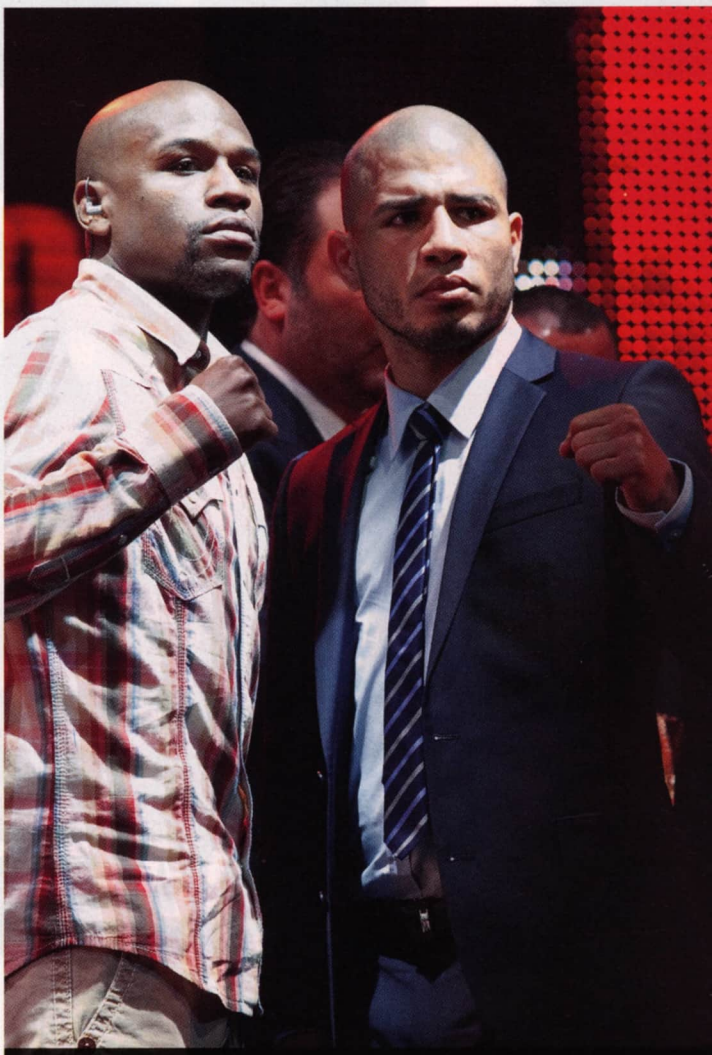
I would arrive at the arena early the day of the fight, even before the official report time. I like to get the feel of the arena before the fans arrive.

I would engage in typical small talk when the other officials arrive to be polite, but would either go off by myself or sit with another official who I knew was also getting mentally prepared for the fight.

I would think about the importance of scoring each three-minute round with no regard to who is the favorite or champion but rather on who is scoring the most-effective punches. Judges must remain neutral.

Once I took my seat on the stool at ringside prior to my fight, I would avoid talking to anyone. That includes the photographers positioned on either side of me. I also would avoid any recognition of the inspectors, one of whom is assigned to each fighter. Many years ago, one former judge nodded to the inspector in the corner of a former champion as they entered the ring. The fight was stopped in the fourth or fifth round and that judge scored the partial round for the former champion, who won a controversial decision. However, members of media noticed the judge's nod prior to the fight and reported it to the former champion, who happened to be standing next to the inspector. I learned what not to do.

After the opening bell, I would focus intently on the criteria on which I base my scoring: effective aggression, defense, aggression and ring generalship. ■



Former judge **Chuck Giampa** explains how he would prepare if he were to work the **Floyd Mayweather Jr.-Miguel Cotto** fight. Image: **Bob Gevinski –Getty Images**

Chuck Giampa can be reached at ***chuckgiampa@aol.com.***

Junior flyweight **Paddy Barnes** won a bronze medal in the 2008 Olympics.

Image: **Matt King-Getty Images**

THE ROAD TO LONDON

THE RING WILL TAKE A LOOK AT THE OLYMPIC TEAM OF ONE NATION EACH ISSUE. THIS MONTH: IRELAND

By: **Norm Frauenheim**

Among the many legends, myths and lyrics, there's a boxing corner in the Irish soul. Somewhere between the Guinness and shamrocks, there's a weathered pair of gloves sitting on a shelf or hanging from a wall at corner pubs from Dublin to New York, from Belfast to Boston. Olympic medals are harder to find.

There are 12 in all – one gold, four silver and seven bronze – in the 24 Olympiads since boxing became a medal sport in 1904. Ireland is tied with Denmark and Mexico, far down the list from the United States, which sits atop the overall count with 109. Then again, the U.S. has a population of nearly 300 million. That's about 50 times bigger than the 6.2 million who live in Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic to the south, an island that will fight under one flag in London.

America has the numbers. But the Irish have a chance, perhaps a better one than they have had since the Barcelona Games in 1992, when they won their only gold with welterweight Michael Carruth and a silver with bantamweight Wayne McCullough, a two-time Olympian who went on to become one of Ireland's best-known boxers with a pro record that includes the World Boxing Council's 118-pound title.

"They have a great chance to win medals," said McCullough, who grew up Protestant on violent streets in a then-divided Belfast and in 1988 carried the Irish Republic's flag at the opening ceremonies for the Seoul Games despite criticism at home in Northern Ireland. "It all comes down to the side of the draw. But the way the bouts are being scored now, anyone can get a win."

Renewed hopes at adding more gold to Irish green in 2012 were planted in 2008 at Beijing. Ireland won one silver and two bronze. It marked an Irish return to the medal stand for the first time since 1992, when Carruth, now a masseur for an Irish football team, and McCullough, now of Las Vegas, were welcomed home by a roaring crowd of

a reported 350,000 at Dublin's airport. At Dublin's pubs, fans toasted Carruth's gold with beer that was sold for one day at 1956 prices. The Irish have been thirsty for more Olympic gold and cheap Guinness ever since.

Andy Lee, now an emerging middleweight at Emanuel Steward's Kronk Gym in Detroit, was seen as that gold-medal prospect after he came home from the 2004 Games in Athens. Lee, the only boxer on Ireland's '04 team, beat Mexico's Alfredo Angulo but was eliminated from the medal rounds in his next bout. Initially, Lee announced he would accept funding from the Irish Sports Council and try again in Beijing. But he changed his mind and jumped at the chance to sign with Steward, a Hall of Fame trainer.

Lee did what boxers from Cuba to Ireland to Russia are doing in greater numbers: He went pro. McCullough, who calls his WBC title a bigger achievement than his Olympic medal, understands. McCullough lost a bruising bout for the 1992 gold to Cuba's Joel Casamayor, a favorite for a second gold at the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta. But Casamayor had other ideas. He walked out of a Cuban training camp in Guadalajara and jumped onto a bus for the U.S. where he would win major championships at junior lightweight and lightweight, including THE RING'S 135-pound title.

"I was told if I won a medal at the Olympics, I'd be set for life," McCullough said in an e-mail. "But when I came home with my silver medal, I was still unemployed and broke!

"If I'd stayed at home, I'd have needed a full-time job as well as trying to fight as a pro. Moving to America was the only way I was able to be a full-time professional boxer. In saying that, the fans are amazing and have supported me no matter what."

Support from fans and a Sports Council created in 1999 are perhaps one reason that two Olympians from Ireland's 2008 team figure to be back for another try in London. Bronze medallist Paddy Barnes, a junior flyweight from Belfast, is eager for another shot at Chinese star Zou Shiming, who won gold four years ago in front of a hometown crowd and perhaps with some hometown cooking.

In a semifinal bout, the computerized judging had Zou winning 15-0, which meant that Barnes didn't land a single punch. According to some reports, video showed that blows by Barnes were in fact scored for Zou. It's not clear whether there were enough of those for Barnes to upset Zou, who is again the gold-medal favorite.

"I have met Paddy," McCullough said of Barnes, who was expected to qualify in April for the London Games. "He's a good little fighter."

Also back for another try at an Olympic medal is bantamweight John Joe Nevin of Mullingar. Nevin was 18 and inexperienced in Beijing, where he was eliminated early. Experience on the Olympic stage and four years of maturity might help the 22-year-old Nevin's chances in London.

Two sad stories, however, have rocked Irish boxing.

Darren Sutherland, a middleweight from County Meath and a bronze medallist in Beijing, went pro. After winning his first four fights after signing with promoter Frank Maloney, Sutherland was found dead at his apartment near London on Sept. 14, 2009. Police ruled that he committed suicide. According to reports, he hanged himself.

Kenny Egan, a light heavyweight from Dublin and a silver medalist in Beijing, is not expected to be back with the Irish team. He reportedly developed a drink-

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Bantamweight **Michael Carruth** is Ireland's only Olympic champion, winning gold in 1992. Image: **Bob Thomas-Getty Images**

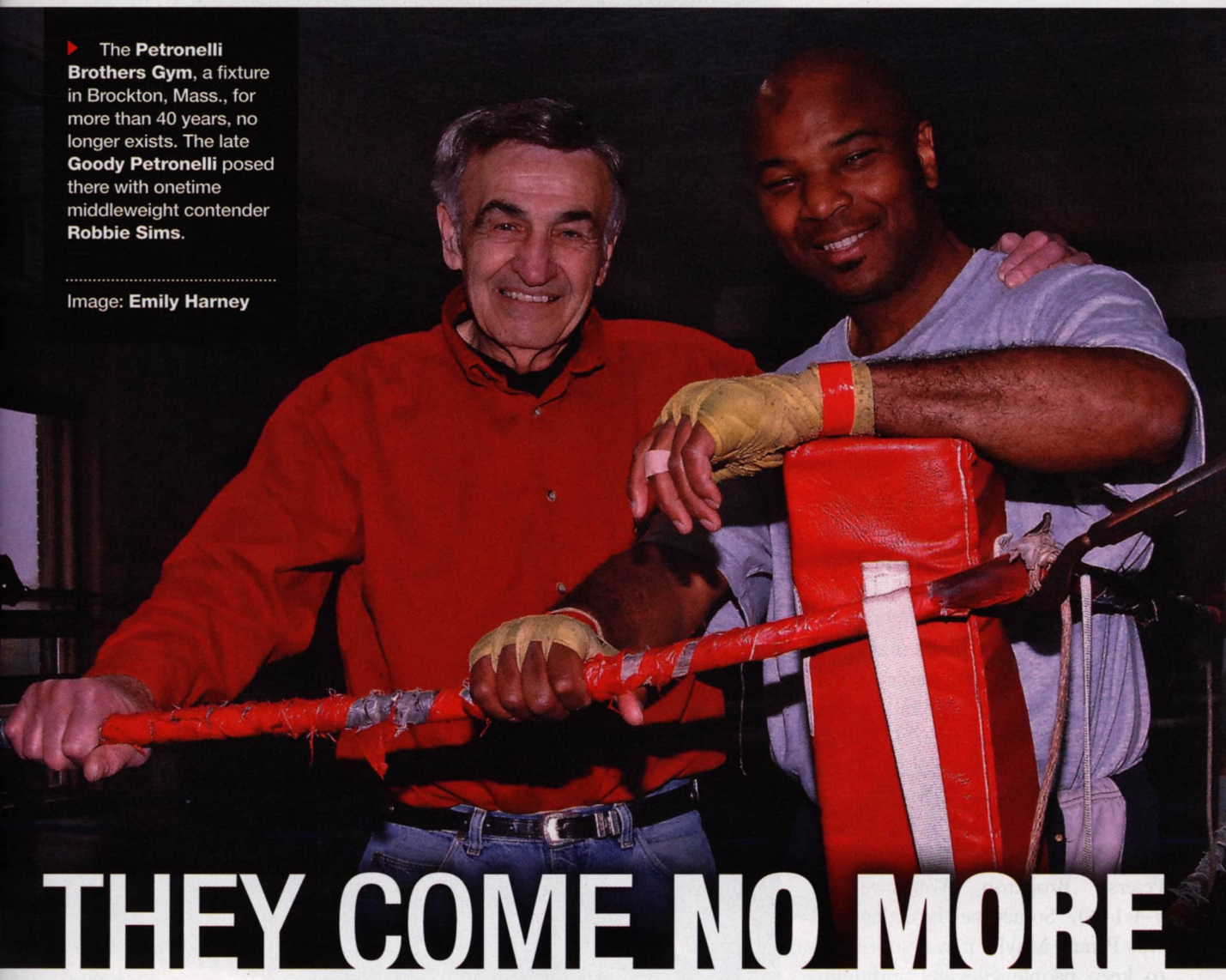
ing problem in celebrating his 2008 medal, which some argue should have been gold. He lost to China's Xiaoping Zhang by an 11-7 score. According to reports based on a review of video, points that should have gone to Egan instead went to Xiaoping.

ALSO, KEEP AN EYE ON

JOE WARD: As a 17-year-old last February, Ward, of Moate, beat Egan, the Beijing silver-medallist, for Ireland's light heavyweight title. Egan had won the Ireland amateur title 10 straight times.

MICHAEL CONLAN: He is only 20, but the Belfast flyweight is quickly emerging as a potential medal contender. The maturing Conlan upset France's Nordine Oubaali, a medal favorite, in September at the World Championships in Azerbijan.

DARREN O'NEILL: He finished second twice at light heavyweight to Egan in national championships. Then, O'Neill, of Paulstown, moved down to middleweight and lost a controversial decision to Sutherland in 2008. He was the runner up in the 2010 European Championships. ■



The **Petronelli Brothers Gym**, a fixture in Brockton, Mass., for more than 40 years, no longer exists. The late **Goody Petronelli** posed there with onetime middleweight contender **Robbie Sims.**

Image: **Emily Harney**

THEY COME NO MORE

By **Don Stradley**

You reached the Petronelli Brothers Gym by climbing a long flight of wooden stairs at 28 Ward Street in Brockton, Mass. In recent years the place was found to have bad wiring, but it certainly looked rock solid, like a cathedral. Once inside you'd notice two well worn boxing rings placed side by side and several heavy bags arranged in a neat row. Some of the equipment was new, but some of it looked as if Max Schmeling had trained on it. Much of the wall space was covered by faded posters of Marvelous Marvin Hagler, dating back to his amateur days. On one wall was a red electric buzzer that sounded during sparring sessions, loud enough to jolt your soul. Goody Petronelli was there almost every night, the keeper of the flame, standing quietly among the loyalists who lingered in the place as if it were a clubhouse. They came because they knew this thin but sturdy old man had trained Hagler. They came because that cavernous old room had once housed greatness.

During the day the gym was vibrant and sunny, but at night it was quiet, almost melancholy, and the hardships of the place seemed to seep out of the walls. Rocky Marciano was supposed to partner up with Goody and his brother Pat, but he was killed in a plane crash. Hagler, the gym's star, spent years being ducked by opponents. The day Hagler won the middleweight championship in London, angry Brits bombed the ring with garbage and smashed the windows of Hagler's limousine. Hagler and the Petronellis drove back to their hotel sitting on shards of broken glass. Nothing came easily for those guys, and you could feel the

hard work in the air, and in the ropes and turnbuckles.

When the money came in and times were good, Brockton remained a hard little city. To Goody, Brockton must've seemed like it was turning upside down, going from an old factory town to a drug-riddled crime zone. Locals may have found inspiration on Ward Street, where a white guy befriended a black teenager and they made history together. That should be the legacy of Petronelli Way, as the street was renamed in 1999. Friendship and love was strong there. That's probably why so many of Hagler's sparring partners were still hanging around 25 years after Hagler retired, like old soldiers still in uniform, hoping to be called into duty.

Goody was just about the warmest guy I have met in boxing. He could heat a room with his smile. He could be tricky, too, especially when it came to his real age. "I'm 21," he'd say. He also was vague about his own brief boxing career, saying, "You'll never find me in the record books." But he's in there, as "Goody Peters, Brockton Welterweight, 9-4-1 (6)." Sometimes he'd deny he was Peters. Maybe it was more fun to keep people guessing, although he liked to brag about the time he fought three times in one night at some long forgotten fight club.

The obits didn't say much about Goody having to relocate the gym a few years ago. A new owner bought the building and said the community would be better served if it was turned into condominiums. Goody found a new spot, but there were more problems. His nephew took over the operation last year, moved it to nearby Stoughton, and renamed it Big East Boxing. For the first time in over 40 years there was no Petronelli gym in Brockton.

The gym was best just before closing time. Goody and a few of his close friends would sit in his office, going over business, or just talking. If my memory serves me, a pencil sketch of Mother Theresa was on the wall over Goody's desk. The banter was steady... *"Hey Goody, you should've seen the sparring today, that Portuguese kid from Fall River likes to mix it up. ... Hey, Goody, the promoter from Rhode Island wondered if we had a female flyweight for the undercard. ... Hey, Goody, Butterbean's son is making a comeback and he needs an opponent. ..."*

Sometimes you heard about rifts. Goody had some business cards printed up that referred to him as "the sole trainer of Marvelous Marvin Hagler." Boston sportswriters pounced, as if the splitting of the Petronelli brothers was a page one scandal. I asked Goody about it years later. He said only that Pat didn't go out in public anymore because he'd had a stroke and was embarrassed at the way he sounded. "I miss him," Goody said. "We were a good team."

Kevin McBride was one of many who came to **Goody Peteronlli** and his gym hoping some of the greatness there would rub off on him. Image: **Emily Harney**

There were offers to train fighters in other parts of the country, but Goody wouldn't leave Brockton, even as the city's boxing talent dwindled. If he had a boxing philosophy, it was "learn the basics and apply them hard." There were no soft jabs thrown in Goody's gym. As recently as 2005, he took an oafish underachiever named Kevin McBride and guided him to an upset win over a faded Mike Tyson. Then McBride told Goody he was retiring because his wife wanted him out of boxing. Meanwhile, other people convinced McBride there was real money to be made. McBride started fighting again, with a different trainer. He's been losing ever since. Goody never commented. McBride was just one of many who came in and out of the old place, hoping some of the greatness would rub off on him.

One quiet night in his office, Goody told me that another Marvin Hagler was going to come into his gym someday.

"That's all I'm waiting for," he said.

Goody's final months were bleak. The gym was gone. His brother died. His wife died, too. The news outlets said Goody was 88 when he died in January. Hagler said on Facebook that Goody had nothing left to do.

Too bad another Hagler never showed up. That would have kept Goody going until he was 105, at least. ■

BERT SUGAR

1937-2012

Image: **Steve Samoyedny-Fightwireimages**

The boxing world lost another icon when author and former RING Magazine Editor Bert Sugar died of cardiac arrest on March 25 at Northern Westchester Hospital in New York.

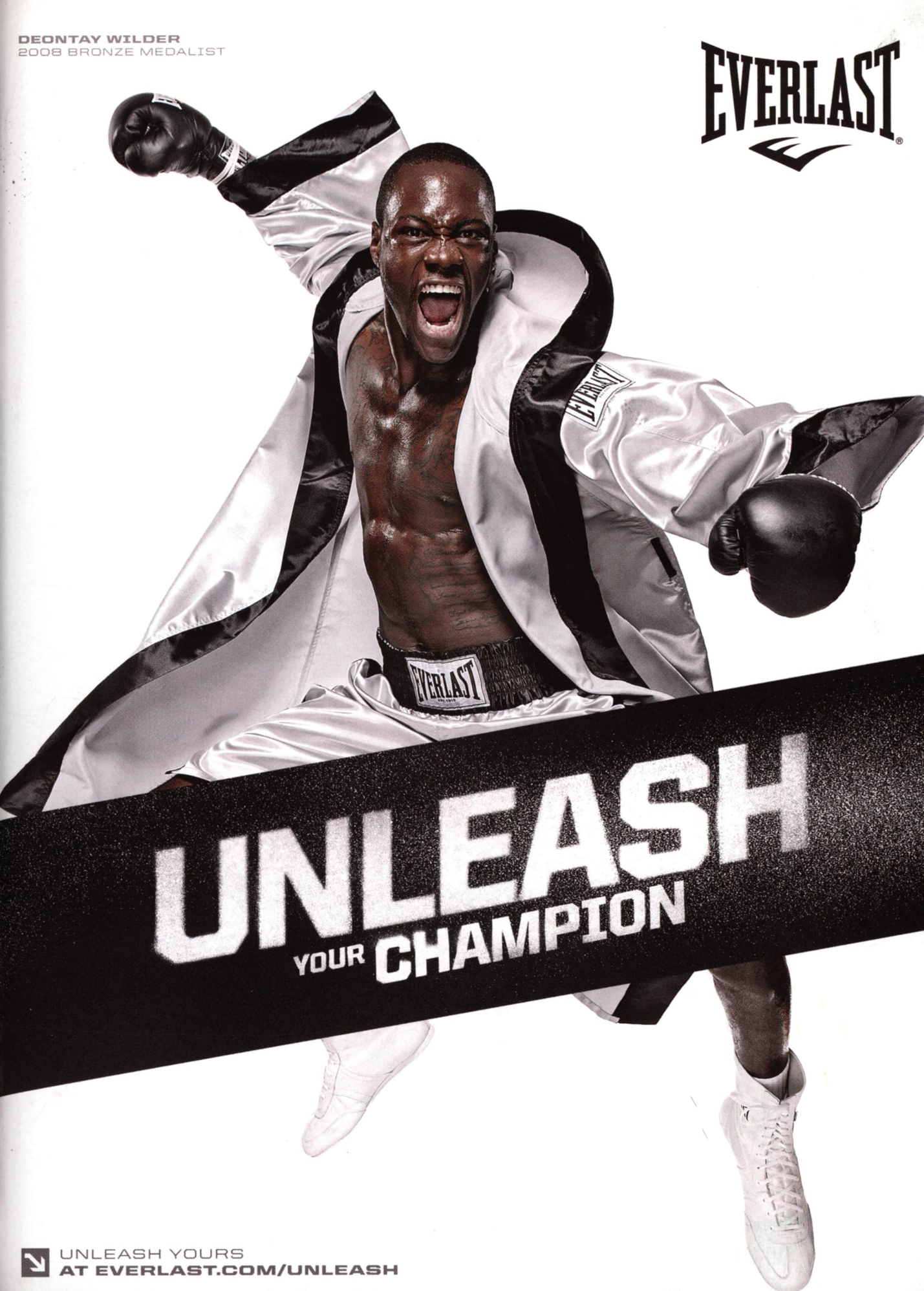
Sugar, 74, was known for his trademark fedora, cigar and pants as colorful as his personality. He was a gifted writer and prolific author, having written 80 books, and his knowledge of boxing history was unparalleled.

He was truly one of a kind.

"Bert Sugar was a brilliant guy," promoter Lou DiBella said. "I mean, he was erudite, he was well read. He knew everything about so many things. Bert managed to make a living by simply being Bert. He was a celebrity by being Bert. That hat, that trademark cigar, those crazy pants.

"There wasn't a bar stool that he didn't like, and there wasn't a guy that didn't like sitting next to him. I'm proud to say that I sat next to him at many a bar stool." ■

Look for a tribute to Sugar in the July 2012 issue.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